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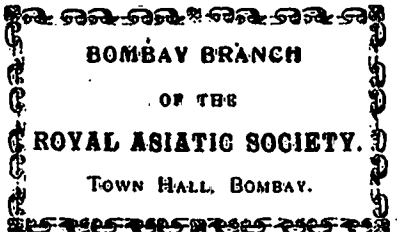

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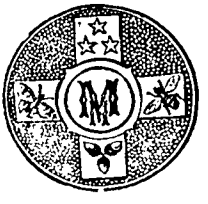
ESSAYS ON CHURCH POLICY.



ESSAYS

ON

CHURCH POLICY.

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EDITED BY

THE REV. W. L. CLAY, M.A.

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PREFACE.

THE purpose of this volume is to discuss, with special reference to the circumstances of the present time, the principles upon which the Church of England may be sustained as a National Church, and the modes of action by which her national character may be further developed. Each of the writers is responsible for his own Essay only.

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Page 193, line 7 from bottom, *after* "for the clergy," *insert* "that they shall have.'

Page 226, line 4 from bottom, *for* "made more durable," *read* "much more durable."

ESSAYS ON CHURCH POLICY.

I.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORKING CLASSES.

Τὸν πατέρα καὶ δημιουργὸν πάντων οὔθ' εὑρεῖν ῥάδιον, οὔθ' εὑρόντα εἰς πάντας εἰπεῖν ἀσφαλές· Ἃ ὁ ἡμέτερος Χριστὸς διὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμεως ἔπραξε. Σωκράτει μὲν γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἐπείσθη ὑπὲρ τούτου τοῦ δόγματος ἀποθνήσκειν· Χριστῷ δε, τῷ καὶ ὑπὸ Σωκράτους ἀπὸ μέρους γνωσθέντι . . . οὐ φιλόσοφοι οὐδὲ φιλόλογοι μόνον ἐπείσθησαν ἀλλὰ καὶ χειροτέχναι καὶ παντελῶς ἰδιῶται, καὶ δόξης καὶ φόβου καὶ θανάτου καταφρονήσαντες. Ἐπειδὴ δύναμίς ἐστι τοῦ ἀῤῥήτου πατρὸς καὶ οὐχὶ ἀνθρωπείου λόγου κατασκευή.

JUSTIN MARTYR, *Apolog.* ii. cap. x. (*ad fin.*)

ALTHOUGH the words "The *Church* and the Working Classes" stand at the head of this paper, yet I have no intention of separating either the interests or the existence of the Church of England from the sum total of English Christianity, of which she may, for our present purpose, stand as the representative. There are indeed, as will be seen, special causes for the failure of the Establishment to attract the Working Classes, but on the whole that failure is not more conspicuous or more lamentable than that of other communities; while, in all probability, it is due essentially to the same deep-lying

causes. The confession of a common failure may possibly do something to re-unite the various branches of the Christian Church in England, if not (although in the remote future even this may be hoped for) in one outward organization, at least in the bonds of mutual sympathy and honourable rivalry. At any rate this confession is better than those exaggerated claims of success, which, while they scarcely serve the purpose of putting even a decent gloss upon failure and disaster, are nevertheless very sufficient to show the denominational jealousy and sectarian bitterness, which at once supply the motive and frustrate the designs of much of the religious working of English Christianity. We may, I think, safely prophesy that no party in England is likely to be led very far away by the intoxication of a real, or even of a fancied, success.

Now of the importance of this subject there cannot be a question. Properly speaking, indeed, it comprises all other questions that are now agitating the English Church, just as really as all political questions a year ago had resolved themselves into this, "How and to what extent shall the Working Classes be admitted to a share of political power?" The alienation of those classes from the Church of England is the one paramount fact that suggests, or rather compels, the need of a reform, and the one absorbing motive which should direct and control that reform ought to be the desire to bring them back again. Only let it be distinctly understood that far more is at stake than the interests of one National Church. Upon the influence which Christianity is to exercise upon the Democracy depends its future existence, at any rate for a century to come, as the ruling

religious power of the civilized world. It is the fashion to say that Christianity is upon its trial; and sometimes a more perfect morality, again a scientific discovery, then an enlarged philosophy, are the instruments which, in the minds alike of friends and foes, are to accomplish the overthrow. Those who believe in the historical truth of the Christian revelation can afford to treat these prophecies with very scant respect, and to rest content with the assurance that all that is essential in Christian teaching will be but more completely proved to be true by the progress of knowledge, and that all that is good in Christian practice will but improve with the improvement of the world, and recommend itself more effectually to the conscience of mankind. But the continued alienation of the Working Classes would stretch the stoutest faith to its utmost tension. If Christianity becomes the religion of a caste, or of a race, or continues to be the religion of a civilization instead of becoming the religion of human nature, it ceases to have any claim upon the undivided allegiance of the world. And if the Democracy, including, as it will do, thousands of men of a pure though possibly imperfect morality, undoubted earnestness, considerable ability, and possessed of a large share of political power, rejects the claims of revelation, and leaves it with contemptuous indifference to the upper and middle classes, then we may be very sure that much more than Established Churches will perish in the confusion.

There is in fact a sense in which it is as true that the dispute between the advocates and the assailants of the Christian religion will have to be settled ultimately by the Democracy, as it is that the dispute between

Conservatism and Liberalism is being referred to the same tribunal: for if Christianity is, in any real effective sense of the word, true, it must be capable of being shown to be true to educated and intelligent men as a class. I say, in any real effective sense of the word, because there is of course another view exactly the opposite of this, which underlies alike the Catholic and the Protestant theory of religion (or to speak more accurately the Catholic practice and the popular Protestant theory), and which is responsible for much of Christian failure and unpopularity. It would not of course shock the faith of those who believe that the Christian religion is a scheme for saving a few souls out of a perishing world, if they were told that the scheme would fail, on the whole, to reach the Working Classes. "So much the worse for them," would be the very intelligible and logical reply. But fortunately for the interests of Christendom there has never wanted a healthier and nobler feeling, though in all candour it must be confessed that in this, as in so many other instances, the preservation of the truth has been due to the, perhaps, extreme opinions of communities, or of men, lying outside the recognised boundaries of the Catholic Church. And to that large and increasing number who are beginning to regard Christianity as God's method of regenerating humanity, and in the literal sense of the word "saving the world," such an announcement would be the death-blow of faith, energy, and hope. We at any rate cannot afford to attach the—to the Jews perfectly appropriate—notion of a "very small remnant" to the work of a religion, which we believe to be, as St. Paul believed it to be, the religion of the "last days," the ultimate revelation—to be developed

in history—of God to man. Faith in human progress is as necessary to the Liberal in religion as to the Liberal in politics, and the hope of a more universal, effective, and pure religion is to him exactly what the hope of a better government or of social improvement is to the other. And therefore both alike make their appeal to that vast and unknown force, that Democracy of which we in England have only this last year become practically conscious, but which, we dimly see, holds within its grasp the destinies of the future, whether in the domain of politics or of religion. Our business is to absorb that mass into the still larger entity which we call the national life; and the Church of England, if she have the faintest conception of her position and responsibility, must set herself to accomplish in religion that which statesmanship has to effect in other departments of thought and action. It need hardly be observed that the influence is not one-sided, but that the Church and State in their turn must hope to be largely influenced for good by their contact with the Demos.

Now this being so, it plainly becomes of the utmost importance to know what are the prevailing sentiments of the Working Classes on the subject of religion. Rhetorically they may be summed up in one word—indifference. It is my object to indicate, as briefly as may be, the extent and causes of this indifference, yet so as to suggest the grounds for a better hope, and also the general direction in which practical reforms should tend. The influences for good, which in its turn the Democracy will exercise upon religion, will, I hope, come out incidentally; but it does not form so distinct a part of my purpose to discuss them. I shall endeavour therefore within such

space as the restrictions necessary in a work like this will allow me to establish or comment on these four propositions :—

I. That the idea of an Established Church is essentially a democratic one; and yet that the Working Classes have no affection for the Established Church of England.

II. That attendance at public worship is essentially a part of democratic religion, and yet that the Working Classes, as a rule, attend nowhere.

III. That the Clergy and the Democracy are naturally friends and allies, and yet that there is no friendship or alliance between the Anglican Clergy and the Working Classes.

IV. That the Christian revelation is one eminently suited to a Democracy, and yet that the Working Classes are indifferent to its claims upon them.

I. In a speech delivered last session in the House of Lords, the Duke of Argyll is reported to have expressed his belief that Voluntary Churches would be the religious communities of the future. Now this seems to me a curious instance of the way in which mere local or national considerations can prejudice the intellect of very able men. Familiar with the past history of the English, and still more of the Scotch Establishment, and fully sensible that their present position with respect to other Christian communities is rapidly becoming untenable, the Duke leaps at a bound to this very wide and sweeping generalization. No doubt the past religious history of the two countries presents to us the prospect of the

gradual invasion of the establishment principle by the denominational; but this resulting, as it does at any rate in one case, from causes and from the existence of communities as old as the establishments themselves, forms but a very slender induction from which to prophesy the religious future of the world. Of course one man is as good a prophet as another until the event; still if we emancipate ourselves for a single moment from the mere passions and prejudices which encumber the question in countries like England or Scotland, and regard rather what may be called its political philosophy, we shall find reason to believe that not only is the idea of an Endowed Church suitable to a Democracy, but that it is the only method in which a Democratic religion can develop itself. Let us consider for a moment the invariable relations of the Demos to the Commonwealth at large. The Demos consists, broadly speaking, of those who, being obliged to maintain existence by hard bodily labour, are thereby excluded from any very large participation in the luxuries, the pleasures, and the blessings of culture and civilization. Hence the constant and legitimate tendency of the Democracy is to insist that this natural inequality shall be as far as possible redressed by spending large sums of money from the national income upon objects calculated to benefit the people; and the whole problem of practical statesmanship centres now in the difficulty of harmonizing this tendency with the general interests of the nation at large. There are however certain cases in which the benefit to the whole commonwealth is so manifest that the claims of the Demos are frankly conceded. Many instances might be quoted, but the typical one is of course national

education; while on the other hand such Bills as that for improving the dwellings of artisans raise the whole problem in its most embarrassing and difficult aspect. Now let us imagine, for the moment, that the Demos becomes as interested in religion as it now is in education; let us suppose—no very incredible supposition—that the Working Classes are as anxious to be provided with the means of religious worship as the Middle Classes are at present. Of course if they remain indifferent, *cadit quæstio;* but then, as I have said, far more than the principle of endowments would fall also. Now religious institutions to be made at all capable of doing their work are very expensive things, as Dissenters, and Churchmen as well, have discovered ere this. Churches cost more than schools, clergymen than schoolmasters. Is not the conclusion therefore inevitable that this is precisely one of those common benefits which the State will be expected to provide in order to redress as far as possible the inequalities of life? Would it not be urged with irresistible force that the religion of the people is as necessary as their education, and that religion, conducing as *ex hypothesi* it does to general prosperity and good government, falls exactly within the limits of those things which in a well-ordered State are provided in part by the common fund? I pass over the distinction sometimes drawn between establishment and endowment, merely remarking that in the case of any very powerful and united Church the latter necessitates the former, in the sense at any rate in which establishment means the ultimate control by the Nation of the Church it subsidizes, or for whose revenue it acts as trustee. Of course I am aware that the United States may be quoted

against me; but apart from the absurdity of quoting the example of a country peculiar alike in its economic condition and in its, at best, but brief historical experience, it is enough to say that the American Demos is neither very poor, nor, as yet, eminently religious. A far more real illustration of what is in fact an elementary truth in the politics of democracies, may be found in the practice of the Athenians with regard to the Theoric Fund. The Theatre, intimately bound up as it was with religious thoughts, together with public festivals and games, was to the people of Athens much what I am assuming religious institutions will be to the Demos of the future; these were at any rate the shape in which their protest against the hardships of life and their craving after rest and recreation were embodied. And we know of course that in that wonderful and typical Periclean democracy, the Theoric Fund provided, at the common expense, for the entertainment of the poor citizens, and was regarded as one out of many legitimate ways of remedying the inequalities of the social state. And its further history, while it shows no doubt how the sentiment upon which it rested might become perverted and abused, is a signal proof of the extremely jealous care with which democracies regard that portion of the common fund set apart for the common use and benefit. That the Middle Classes would now submit to almost any privation sooner than tamper with funds, which (whether in the Established Church, or in the Dissenting Communities) had been set apart for religious purposes, may, I think, be taken for granted; but it gives us a very faint idea indeed of the horror and indignation with which such a scheme would be received by the Working

Classes, if once they were interested in the well-being of the national religion.

It is perhaps necessary to go a step further than this, and to assert that not only is an Established Church eminently suited to a Democracy, but also that in it alone the people can exercise that controlling and regulative power which belongs to them. The fatal defect of Voluntary Churches is that they become—to use an old-fashioned word—timocratic. Two men who subscribe £100 a year can control the government of a Church consisting of three hundred men who subscribe £1 apiece. In every voluntary association those who find the money must ultimately be the governors, because they can in the last resort withdraw the support by which the association is maintained. This explains one of the worst features in modern dissent—the tendency to do homage to a class of men of whom Sir Morton Peto may be taken as a type. That this evil is not worse than it is, is due to the self-restraint and sincere love of liberty which has hitherto characterised this class as a whole, but it is at best an ugly feature, and full of danger in time to come. Now when the funds of a Church are derived from endowments or from the public purse, then every man has a right to a voice in the management of the Church, not in proportion to the amount of his individual taxation, but by virtue of the zeal, the knowledge, and the ability which he can bring to bear upon the subject. This is the very essence of Democracy. And growing out of this there arises a realization of the Christian, as connected with the Democratic, idea, in more ways than I can stop to point out. The liberty of the teacher, the equality of the taught, the democratic idea of union in

one body instead of division into warring sects,—all these are characteristic of an Endowed Church, and are still in some considerable degree preserved for the world in the Church of England. When, for instance, Mr. Goldwin Smith affirms that he respects the Church of England but detests the Establishment, it may with some reason be replied that the very things on account of which his respect is paid are precisely those which are due to her position as an Establishment.

The second part of our proposition, that the Working Classes have no affection for the Established Church, requires but little proof, though on the other hand we must beware of exaggeration. It seems to me, as far as I can gather from the general attitude of the men, as evidenced for instance in the report of the London Coffee House Conference, and still more from the studiously moderate and tentative tone which Mr. Bright uses when speaking on this question, that they have a lingering respect for the Establishment, and an instinct that, whatever it may have come to be, it is still in its essence a popular institution. The conservative section of the Working Classes on the other hand make the maintenance of the union between Church and State a prominent part of their political programme. Of course in those too many cases in which the claims of the Established Church are on one side, and the interests of liberty on the other, working men may readily be inflamed into antagonism, or even induced to take the side of the Voluntary Churches in the quarrel; but then they do not speak with quite the same contempt of the Church of England as they do of other English Churches. Nor to the best of my knowledge has the Reform League

ever hinted at a crusade against the endowments of the Church. Still an alienation amounting almost to positive dislike is a palpable fact; and the reasons for it it is our business to discuss, and to point out under their respective heads. At present they may be summed up in two main facts. First the policy of the Church itself has been such as to turn her into a denomination. She has not thoroughly realized her duties, not so much to members of other communities, as to the same persons regarded simply as citizens of the State with which she is connected. The proposal to exclude Dissenters who do not pay voluntary church rates from the vestry (so far as concerns ecclesiastical matters), the refusal to undertake to educate children unless they will learn all the formularies prescribed by the Church, the jealousy of the State tribunals, the eagerness to support the voluntary principle in the colonies, and the general attitude maintained towards other English branches of the Church universal—the attitude of an irritated rival rather than of a friendly elder sister—are painful evidences of this spirit of denominationalism, against which the very notion of a National Church is a perpetual protest. And again the Church has become—to coin a word—intensely *middle-classy*. The Democracy has stood aloof from her just as they have done from the army, the internal politics, and the foreign policy of the kingdom. The Clergy on their part have got to take the upper-class view of things, and, not without sturdy resistance, have allowed the Church to become a conservative catchword. Politically and economically they have been against the Working Classes, and without, to their honour, engaging actively against them have let it become known that

their sympathies, their interests, their predilections were (naturally enough, perhaps) on the other side. In fact the Church may be said to have taken up as regards the Working Classes the position, not of rational justice, but of complacent benevolence. The Middle Class on the other hand has dominated since the Reform Bill in the Church, exactly as it has in the country, and has impressed its own ideas upon her worship, her constitution, and whatever reforms have been accomplished. This will appear more clearly as we proceed, but I adduce two facts in illustration of it now, because their full force and meaning is not always rightly comprehended.

The middle-class theory of life is, that out of a number of persons starting in rivalry and competition together, a few should be specially successful, the most just enabled to live, and a fair proportion fail so completely as to require to be supported by charity—say in almshouses built by the money, and for the glorification, of their successful brethren. The working-class theory is on the contrary, that every man, whatever his industry or ability, should succeed or fail alike. Now without discussing the relative value of these theories, which I have purposely stated in exaggerated terms, it is very evident that this description of the middle-class theory applies without any exaggeration at all to the English Church. It is expressed, almost caricatured, in the writings of Sydney Smith as the great principle upon which the patronage of the Church should be distributed. By it a few men succeed enormously in their profession, which success again is administered by the hands, and shared by the *protégés*, of the aristocracy. The mass are barely enabled to live, while many remain "poor

parsons," suitable objects of pity and worthy recipients of old clothes. This consideration explains at once the outspoken indignation of the working men at the poverty of the Clergy and the inequality of benefices. It is by no means a sentimental or partisan complaint, but rather the existence of such abuses is intolerable and inexplicable to an ordinary working man, who would starve for a month sooner than allow an unfortunate brother to receive less wages than himself. That the labourer is worthy of his hire, and is not to be put off with old clothes, is a very great truth indeed with him. And as he has not the faintest chance of making his voice heard in the matter, he can at least utter a practical protest against a religion of this kind, and refuse to darken the doors of an institution that permits a state of things in his view plainly immoral and unjust.

The second instance is connected with an abuse that perhaps as much as any other topic excited the indignation of the men at the meeting above referred to—I mean the sale of livings. The ordinary Englishman regards a living simply as a piece of property; and as property is the most sacred thing in the world, the owner has clearly a right to do what he pleases with his own. Need we wonder that the Working Classes protest energetically against such a view of the matter? Perhaps there is hardly an instance in which the rights and duties of property come into more direct collision than in the sale of livings; and when we have on the one hand the claims of the owner sanctioned by law and custom, and on the other an increasing protest upon moral and perfectly unselfish grounds from the heart of the Democracy, we seem to discern a source of

unpopularity and weakness to the Church of England, which hardly admits of a remedy at present, and a difficulty which hardly anything short of a revolution can remove.

Whether or no this Revolution will come to pass, or what form, supposing it to be inevitable, it will assume, is a question upon which it is vain now to speculate. One of two things appears ultimately certain: either the Church must become really national—that is, comprehensive—or else she must cease to be established. The former alternative, which is at least possible, would remove that alienation of the Democracy of which we have been speaking. Those who deprecate the latter, as a real calamity both to Church and State, may however acquiesce in, with a view to make the best of, the inevitable, especially if vanquished in fair fight by opponents who would have, as Nonconformists, real, though I for one believe thoroughly mistaken, grounds of opposition and dislike. But it is difficult to think with ordinary patience of that large and increasing number within the Church, who, in their childish impatience of what they deem "bondage," are beginning to welcome the idea of dis-establishment. It is melancholy to think that the ecclesiastical spirit, assuming the garb and speaking in the name of religion, has made—of all persons in the world—Churchmen disloyal to the Constitution, and comparatively careless of the interests of their country. Those who call themselves "good" Churchmen ought to be above all things desirous that the Church should stand by the State in all the troubles and dangers, which are for ever gathering about the path of a country like England, and should thus be enabled to lend the full weight of her moral and

religious influence to the task of alleviating and removing them. To cry out for a release just at this moment resembles nothing so much as the conduct of a wife, who, when things began to look gloomy and threatening, should utter whispers about obtaining a divorce, not forgetting to warn her solicitor to look well to the terms of her settlements.

II. Attendance at public worship may surely be regarded as a faithful index of the amount of interest felt towards religion by any given class of men. In the case of individuals it is of course conceivable that persons of a certain turn of mind may be sincerely attached to the truths, as well as to the morality, of the Christian religion without feeling themselves able, or at any rate disposed, to attend services (to them) encumbered by a sermon, or conducted in such a manner as to violate their ideas of taste and order. But when certain sentimentalists appear anxious to claim the benefit of this exception for the Working Classes in a body, and to assert that though they do not attend public worship, their lives are nevertheless admirable examples of pure and undefiled religion, one is bound to summon common sense into court to expose egregious nonsense. For it is very obvious that to the great mass of mankind both the practice of, and the belief in, religion, require much external help in the way of instruction, united prayer, and outward forms. And if this be true anywhere, it must be true especially of those whose lives are spent in hard work, exposed to many coarse temptations, without much opportunity of obtaining instruction for themselves. Working men, moreover, are especially gregarious in their habits, and

if they realize religion at all will certainly do so as members of a community, with its place of meeting, its outward observances, its pledge of brotherly love and communion. But what is of more importance still, it must be remembered that religion has its devotional as well as its practical side, and that the second without the first is but a maimed and imperfect representation of the Christian ideal.* A man may be a very good man, and yet be all the better for coming to say his prayers on Sunday with his neighbours and kinsfolk. And further, as working men with almost one consent do not plead this excuse for themselves, but either profess their indifference to religion altogether, or else—far more frequently—acknowledge that they "do not go to church as often as they might," it may be concluded that this fallacy is effectually disposed of. If then outward worship be practically a test of the interest that any given class feels towards religion, how does the case stand with the Working Classes? I do not believe that the ordinary account, which represents that it is as much the habit of the Working Classes, with large exceptions, to stay away from church, as it is the habit of the Upper Classes, with the same exceptions, to attend, is at all exaggerated. I speak from experience in London, which is perhaps in this as in so many other respects below the level of provincial towns: but in the East of London the failure to attract the men as a class is very marked,—is, I had almost said, absolute. I have been assured by one of the most intelligent and trustworthy men I ever had the fortune to meet, that out of forty men who worked with him *one* would certainly go to church, another would if he were asked, and the remaining thirty-eight

would not under any circumstances. And he added, what every one's experience will verify, that this was a fair example of the general state of things among artisans of the first class. Desperate attempts are indeed made to evade the "logic of facts," and success of a certain sort, among the emotional, the feeble-minded, and the lovers of spectacles and novelties, is adduced as a great result in "Christianizing the masses." There is probably more unconscious and perfectly honest lying about the number of persons, and especially of working men, composing a congregation than about anything else in the known world. And although the churches in the East of London may present a more deplorable spectacle than can be found elsewhere, yet it must be remembered that they are badly attended simply because the population is almost entirely composed of those classes who in the "best-worked" country parishes are equally conspicuous by their absence. The perfectly respectful, intelligent, and dexterous artisan, for whom the authorities naturally send in times of emergency to do a difficult job at the church, never enters it for any other purpose. If then the failure be so palpable—and some failure all acknowledge—what are the causes? Now the causes lie far deeper than any mere defects in the mode of conducting divine service, or any objections which working men have, or fancy they have, to it. They are connected with those relations of the Demos to the Establishment, the Clergy, and the Christian Revelation of which—in the two latter instances—we have yet to speak. Men in earnest about religion, and on good terms with its ministers, would not lightly be kept away from its ordinances. Of course if a man be put upon his defence,

and peremptorily challenged to say why he does not come to church, he will naturally, as did the speakers at the London Coffee House, catch at the first available weapon of defence and lay the blame on something in the services themselves, especially if it be something for which the challenger is responsible. Two causes, however, there are which are of some real importance in driving the Working Classes away from the Church, and which I will mention as furnishing notable illustrations of the besetting sins of the Established Church—her tendency to make herself into a denomination, and her disposition to place herself bound hand and foot at the feet of the Middle Classes.

The first is connected with the always delicate subject of the pecuniary arrangements of the Church,—her method, that is, of raising money. A Church receives endowments and a legal position upon the implied condition that she is to do, so to speak, the religious work of the country. And if the revenues assigned to her be, after the most judicious and equitable distribution (an experiment that has not yet been tried in the English Church), inadequate to the task, then she must rely upon the free liberality of her members. This rule applies universally, and may be illustrated by the history of the Crimean and American civil wars, in both of which private liberality in various indirect ways came to the assistance of the respective Governments, even after large sums had been voted out of the public purse. But the one thing which may *not* rightly be done by a National Church any more than by an army, by a clergyman any more than by a soldier, is to sell the services for which he is otherwise paid. Yet this is precisely what the Church of

England does in three obvious instances,—church rates, fees, and pew-rents. The first of these, whatever they may have been in intention once, have come to be now a mere supplementary taxation on the part of Churchmen of those who derive no direct benefit from the Establishment. They are a breach of the implied, but perfectly real, agreement upon which the Church holds her endowments. It is, however, chiefly fees and pew-rents that vex the soul and alienate the affections of the working man. In a Church endowed for the express purpose of providing for the religious wants of the community, the Clergy have got themselves put into the degrading position of making a charge to the poor man.* From the cradle out of which he comes to be baptized, and very frequently to be charged for it, to the grave in which he cannot be laid until the claims of the parson, the clerk, the sexton, and the bell-ringer are duly satisfied, he is pursued by vexatious exactions, which have the additional demerit of being a sort of poll-tax levied on rich and poor at the same rate. But even this is nothing to the system of pew-rents, of which the only description that I can find at all adequate is Mr. Henley's famous expression, "a device of Old Nick's to oppress the poor," and, it may be added, to destroy the nationality of the English Church. If a working man ventures into most

* I cannot resist quoting a story as illustrating the evil effects of this. One woman was overheard by a District Visitor remonstrating with another for having had her banns put up away from her parish church,—"For," said she, "you have had a good deal, Mrs. So-and-so (she was a widow), out of the parsons at that church, and I do think that when you can put a shilling or two in their way you ought."

At the same time it is obvious that marriage fees for the performance of what is an important legal as well as a religious ceremony stand upon a different footing.

district and many parish churches, he is thrust into "free (and uncomfortable) seats" between, as the *Saturday Review* once excellently phrased it, "two frowning phalanxes of pews," and he is told that in this so-called national church he has no right to any of the "good" seats, unless he can afford a certain number of guineas per annum, and so become that mysterious being, the religious synonym for a ten-pound householder, a seat-holder. Can any one who knows the character of the average working man wonder that he secedes from a Church which possesses such vast privileges, and assumes such a lofty air, and descends to such mean devices as these? It is to the eternal credit of the High Church party (besides being a tower of strength), and should be allowed by all liberally-minded persons to counter-balance much extravagance of doctrine and ritual, that they have been the first to preach, and to act up to this truth. Indeed the High Church formula, which knows no distinctions in church except that of Priest and People, is perhaps the nearest practical approach in England to democracy of a certain type, and, if the name and thing presbyter were substituted for the name and thing priest, might exactly express the democratic theory of worship. The question of appropriation without payment rests of course upon a different footing, and might safely be left to local feeling and convenience; but the abolition, wherever practicable, of pew-rents does imply of necessity the re-establishment of the weekly offertory, which again is the true expression of the democratic idea of almsgiving, and is almost invariably popular with working men. Meanwhile it is, I think, possible to suggest a very easy palliation for

evils now become too inveterate to be wholly removed. By an application of the same principle which compels the running of parliamentary trains, let every church have at least one free service—if necessary, even after the first evening service, and in lieu of the abortive afternoon one,—and let all seats be let with the express condition that the holders do not occupy them at that service. This remedy is easy: I wish I could add that I felt sure it would be very effectual to heal the breach which years of pew-rents have caused and will perpetuate.

The second of the two causes for the alienation of the Demos from the services of the Church is to be found in the manner in which the services are conducted. Probably there is not in all Christendom a type of service so undevout, so unintellectual, so unimpressive, and at the same time so admirably suited to British Philistinism, as the once popular, and still common, service of the English Church. Wit has almost exhausted itself on the "parson and clerk duet," the gallery singing, the beadle, and the pew-opener, but they flourish yet. Here again much credit is due to the High Church party for perceiving that the English service was, to put it mildly, capable of improvement. Much good no doubt has been effected by the reforms they have instituted, but it is to be feared that the remedy, so far as working men are concerned, is little better than the disease. The capital mistake has been committed of trying to allure them—like so many children—by a gorgeous ritual, and of defending this course by appealing to their love of processions, theatrical adornments, and so forth. Whereas the answer, if one were given, would be

this: "We are not children at all, but very like grown up men and women in other ranks of life. Like them, we have a fancy for pomp and show at our festivals, social gatherings, and demonstrations. Like them also, the great majority of us are accustomed to associate a reverence for divine things with simplicity, with an absence of show, elaborate detail, and fatiguing ceremonialism." Personally I believe that the English Service with a very few alterations, a little shortening perhaps, or rather dividing, of the services, is capable of being made by far the most attractive to intelligent artisans of any type of service that has been yet invented. And it is certainly founded on a true democratic, that is congregational, idea. From first to last the Prayer Book hardly seems to recognise more than the "minister" or "priest" who is to "say" the prayers, and the "people" who are to "say" them with him. And it seems to me a matter of indifference from the democratic point of view, whether a choir is put into a gallery at the west end of the church to sing anthems over the heads of the "audience," or railed off into a chancel at the east end to sing introits and antiphons at strange and unwonted places. The general principles upon which a service suitable for working men should be founded are briefly as follows. Churches should be as beautiful as art and light can make them, especially by calling in the aid, to an extent hitherto undreamt of, of mural painting and sculpture. All the arrangements for conducting the service should be such as to give, not *effect*, but *meaning* to its several portions. The aim should be to appeal far more than has hitherto been done to the intelligence, as opposed to the senses or the

feelings. Nothing should be allowed, so far as it can be prevented, to come in between the people and the act of worship which they are assembled to perform. Let, for instance, the choir be composed of men and women selected from all the various classes who make up a congregation, and be simply placed in the front seats in the body of the church to lead the rest. Let the prayers be read (as a preference), the people responding in their natural voices, with much singing of hymns and chanting of psalms, and we may hope to have a service in which plain simple folk can take their part and exercise their rights, being protected from the vagaries of extempore praying on the one hand, and the minutiæ of ceremonialism on the other. There are signs that the High Church service is already departing from its original congregational type.

III. The very fundamental idea of the ministry of the Gospel is, that they who compose its ranks are the friends of those who may without offence be termed in this connexion—the poor. Ministers of Christ are charged with the duty of delivering a message intended to alleviate the sufferings and sweeten the cup of life. They are supposed to be specially connected with no single class, but to be a witness of the unity of all classes, composers of differences, arbiters between contending interests, advocates of the weak and defenceless. And in this view of their duty and position, by common consent, the Clergy of the English Church are not as a class found wanting. They raise and administer vast sums in the relief of the sick and distressed. They spend many hours in visiting and consoling the dying. Their labours

in the cause of education have been beyond all praise. They often stand between the poor and the tyranny of employers or of guardians. They embark in a thousand schemes for the promotion of the welfare of the Working Classes. And all this is, I think, fairly recognised by the men themselves, who know that after all the average parson has not a single selfish interest opposed to theirs, that he has a sincere desire to benefit them according to his lights, and that officially or personally he can do them many a good turn. This general regard shows itself, for instance, in the outward respect which as a rule is paid to clergymen. Of course a man whose very presence is, or at any rate is regarded, as a special notice to "be good," who wears a distinctive dress, and uses, perhaps too freely, a distinctive language, must expect to be treated behind his back with that half real, half affected contempt, that partly good-natured, partly sincere dislike which is by no means confined to one class, but which finds abundantly open expression in the popular literature of the day. But otherwise a clergyman—merely as such—may be in constant intercourse with artisans and labourers without meeting with a single uncivil look or word, except from "vile and churlish" persons who are to be found in every class of society. The same thing shows itself again in a very considerable amount of real confidence. Working men entrust the Clergy with the education of their children, and with the care of their money. It shows itself once more in the readiness with which the services of the minister are welcomed at the last hour. I have stood by the death-bed of many a working man, and after the first suspicions were removed, and perhaps the dislike

to the popular religiousness overcome, I have met with nothing but openness, cordiality, and affection. But here it stops. Beyond this the Clergy as a body have no living influence upon the hearts and conduct of the artisan class. There is no mutual sympathy, no intelligent acquaintance with each other's views and wishes. The working man fights as shy of the parson as he can, and is not to be persuaded into familiarity or friendship. If on the one hand his dislike is mainly artificial, on the other his indifference is certainly unaffected.

Now the main cause of all this springs from the view which the Clergy, as a rule, take of the Working Class, and of the line of conduct which that view prompts them to adopt. Only in all fairness it must be remembered that the clergyman is not without excuse. For he sees unfortunately only the worst side of this class. He is brought into constant contact with wretched homes, beaten wives, starving children whom no persuasion of his can get sent to school. His acquaintance with the principles and transactions of Trade Unions is confined to his knowledge of the many "clubs" which have broken up, cheating their members, and leaving them to be maintained in age and sickness by him, or to his practical experience of the misery entailed by strikes. If he pleads the cause of some poor fellow, a hundred tales of his idleness or dishonesty are repeated by angry employers, or guardians smarting under the odium of a heavy poor rate. No wonder that he begins to take a view lamentably below the true one. To him the Working Classes are always, in his technical language, "the poor." They are objects of his benevolent activity. It hardly enters into the mind of, at any rate,

an old-fashioned clergyman, that there are multitudes of artisans living honourable and well-to-do lives, with very strong views on things in general, and on the whole as unpromising objects for the exercise of the virtue of benevolence as can well be imagined. And growing out of this, there arises a fatal train of mistakes and perplexities in his plans for bringing religion to bear upon the "masses,"—some of them almost too ludicrous to be believed. Sometimes they are patronised, with great protestations against patronage, as "my" working men. I remember hearing a dignitary of the Church of England, when speaking of a Working Man's Club, exclaim in an outburst of triumphant Liberalism, "I *make* them manage their own affairs."

Even upon points where there might be real popularity and confidence gained, the Clergy somehow or other get wrong. Here are two instances. They would meet no doubt with very considerable support and gratitude from the Working Classes in their efforts to preserve Sunday as a day of rest; but the men see plainly enough that the anxiety to discourage any lengthening of the hours of labour is subordinated to the desire of imposing their own views of "Sabbath-keeping" upon a class whose different circumstances demand a very different treatment. In like manner all grace is taken from the boon of education, and all gratitude from its recipients, by the ungracious and arbitrary attitude assumed towards the parents; and this is all the more provoking, because the Clergy in their public policy contradict their private conduct and kindly toleration of the beliefs of others. The parents cannot but see that the education of their children is made the battle-field of religious factions. On the one hand the Clergy, as represented by their own

Society, insist upon retaining the right to teach Church doctrines, whether the parents like it or not; on the other, partisans equally resolute are determined that no religion—at any rate no doctrines—shall be taught, whether the parents wish it or no: while the simple alternative of offering religious teaching to those who will accept it, and of securing to the parent some liberty of action under the Conscience Clause, has but just contrived to secure a hearing. Then, again, there is a fatal habit of regarding mere external results instead of adhering to sound principles of action. Young men, for instance, are gathered into Christian Young Men's Associations or Church of England Institutes; and when it is represented that clubs for the purpose of instruction or society, if founded upon a religious basis, would not be tolerated for an instant among the upper classes, the answer is that they "do good." As though anything could in the long run really do good that was founded upon a mistaken system. What is *seen* is the good done, or supposed to be done, to the few who belong to them; what is *not seen*, and is incapable of being measured, is the general evil effect upon the religion of the whole class. For every feeble-minded Christian young man produced at these institutions ten sturdy and independent minds, capable of leading the class to which they belong, are alienated and repelled. Nor does the attempt to win these men by purely secular means, such as clubs, avail much better, for there is at present a lurking and not altogether unfounded suspicion that the parson has some ulterior views of his own, and means to make the club a back entrance to the church. Still to this there are numerous exceptions,* as I have the good fortune to

* Notably the Working Men's College in Great Ormond Street.

know. When once the men are convinced that the clergyman is meeting them on their own ground, they will in their turn meet him with a cordiality, a gratitude, and, in plain words, a deference, which it is often hard to deserve. But then this brings him very little nearer to what after all is his one business,—the influencing them for good in religious matters; nor will this ever be accomplished, until we have understood their position, and done justice to their opinions, above all gained over their leaders, and approached them through the men and the institutions they value and support. Time, and reform, and the union of classes, and a better knowledge of each other, can alone remove the obstacles which at present stand between the Clergy and the Demos. Political Economy, which in one of its aspects might almost be called the science of Christian benevolence, will do much towards helping the Clergy in dealing with the various social and economic difficulties and miseries which are now left to the agency of a charity most well meaning, devoted, and unsparing, but very frequently misguided and ineffectual.

IV. But after all it is merely playing upon the surface of a great subject to ascribe this alienation of the Demos to anything short of the theological forms under which Christian truth is presented to the people. It is religious thought,—that is, the doctrines impressed upon the Church by the few and accepted by the many,—that must be held answerable for Christian success or failure in practice. There is, let us observe, no natural infidelity among the Working Classes. Some of course, in their general revolt against everything instituted or

established in the country, are as regards religion unbelievers. Many more, when pressed for a reason why they decline the outward profession of a religion which their moral convictions assure them to be true, take refuge in an insincere and pretended infidelity as the easiest and safest shelter. But the enormous majority never really think about the matter at all, and are inclined to accept as true the religious creed which they have inherited or been taught, provided it does not interfere with the daily course of their lives and conduct. That this is a fair account of the "faith" of the Working Classes may, I think, be proved by these facts among others: that they manifest a decided preference for a religious education, and that they sincerely respect a sincerely religious man. Nor again can it be pretended that the Christian Revelation is less suited to the Demos than to any other class. It was preached by a Poor Man of the outward rank of an artisan—whom the "common people heard gladly." It soon took the form of a revolt—none the less real because not political—against the "powers that be" whether in Church or State. It comes to cheer the burden of life to those upon whom that burden presses most heavily. At this moment it is the one motive power of all the many schemes for alleviating human misery. It is anchored upon that essentially democratic virtue, hopefulness; and it claims to establish in its own way, that equality after which Democracy has toiled almost since the dawn of history with more than Herculean labour, and less than Sisyphean success. And lastly, it is presented for man's acceptance in a form especially adapted to catch the attention and enlist the sympathies of plain working

people; for it is not a creed, nor a philosophy, nor a sentiment, nor a morality, but a Person and a history which comprise all these, and yet are different from, and greater than, all these. If then the fault do not lie in the nature of the religion itself, or in the incapacity of those to whom it is addressed, still less, I confidently maintain, is it to be attributed to any want of zeal or energy on the part of the Clergy. No picture indeed can be sadder than the one presented in the lives of hundreds of hard-working, unsuccessful men; unsuccessful, that is, not as compared with others, but as compared with what they feel ought to be accomplished. They spare themselves no toil, they try any and every experiment that can be suggested. But so far as the *élite* of the Working Classes are concerned, they are like actors playing before a listless audience, on the five-hundredth night of a drama that has outlived its popularity. The old formulæ have lost their influence upon the hearts of men, and the Clergy find that nineteenth-century targets are not to be pierced by sixteenth-century ordnance. They would sacrifice anything if they could bring the personal living influence of their Master to bear upon the myriads about them, to whom in His name they are sent. And thus the waste of power is enormous. Zeal that might convert a world achieves next to nothing, because of the theological trammels by which it is fettered and misguided. Sooner or later men must come to see this. Mere ecclesiastical arrangements, or mistakes such as I have before alluded to, can never account for an alienation so distressing. The Evangelical party appear fully sensible of this, and can do nothing but pray and hope for a revival of the

old Evangelical earnestness. Their rivals, while taunting them with an ungenerous bitterness fatal to the very notion of religion, are engaged in the futile task of putting the strong new wine of nineteenth-century thought into bottles that were waxing old more than four centuries ago, and have not improved since that time. Though I cannot hope at the close of a single paper to treat even superficially a subject which requires —and would justify—a book in itself, yet I must at least attempt to indicate some of the principal causes of this theological failure.

(1.) The first that would instinctively suggest itself to any inquirer is the existence of religious divisions and hatred. This is perhaps rather a result than an instance of the corruption of religious thought, but anyhow it stands first in our melancholy list. "The Church of Rome is the slayer of souls, the mother of perdition," exclaims the Protestant. "*Nulla salus extra Ecclesiam*" is the answering war-cry thundered from the opposing barrier. In England the law courts and Parliament itself are vexed with the cries of contending factions seeking to exclude each other from the fold. At this moment a popular cry has been—it must be admitted not until after immense exertions—raised to the effect, that if we cannot silence or banish the doctrines and the practices of a certain objectionable party, we ought at least to take their vestments from them. And all this miserable wrangling is carried on in full view of the working man to whom religion is to be taught. He, whose circumstances and easy good-nature alike incline him to accept the lazy creed of an Epicurean universalism, is to be approached after this fashion. He may not have the

Gospel preached to him without at the same time being solemnly warned against some other preacher of the same Gospel. "Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing." In vain do we seek to escape from the peremptory condition of success imposed by the Founder of Christianity Himself:—"By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye have love one to another:" or again;—"That they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." In vain do we sacrifice everything, if we cherish our strife and hatred. In vain do we make zeal do the work of charity. Contemporary religious history is the record of the failure, and zeal does but slay itself in the impossible attempt. Our religious teaching wants the one thing that can recommend it to the Demos, because it wants the one thing that recommended it to the world at first. And this one thing is not inward unity, still less outward uniformity; is not even the cessation of religious strife and jealousy. But the one imperative reform required at our hands is this,—that different communities—"all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours"—should learn to regard each other as but different regiments in the army of the Church Militant: that whatever jealousies, or claims to superiority, or imputations of failure are consistent with the unity of an army, should be subordinated to the feeling, that all are under One Commander and have one common enemy—human ignorance and wickedness. Then the poison would be taken out of our controversies, the danger out of our divisions, and we could approach the Working Classes without feeling that in the most important point of all in Christianity we, its preachers,

were inferior to those to whom we preached. To the promotion of this idea every Christian who calls himself a Liberal should direct his energies, and that immediately.

(2.) Closely connected with the above, as cause and effect, comes another failing in the theology of the day which it is easier to realize than to describe. But it may be summed up as a tendency to attach exaggerated importance to minor doctrines and small points of difference. It is, so to speak, a want of the sense of theological perspective. So long as Christianity endures, we may be sure that the historical events upon which it rests will be approached differently by differently constituted minds, whether national or individual, and will create various forms of belief, and of practice also. Mere doctrinal unity is not merely impossible, but contrary to the whole genius of Christianity as a belief in an historical revelation. But the reform which lies within our reach, and which the pressure of democratic unbelief tends steadily to produce, takes the direction of subordinating minor differences to larger points of agreement—say rather to a united belief in the historical truthfulness of the New Testament. No doctrines have played a more important part in Ecclesiastical History than those concerning the nature of the Real Presence and of Justification, and yet before another century has passed away we may hope that they, with many others, will cease to be among the number of the things that vex the unity of the Church. That, for instance, almost all Christians keep the Lord's Supper by command and in memory of One Master, and mainly in the way in which He prescribed (many additions and one diminution notwithstanding); that all regard it as a spiritual blessing to

the individual recipient, and as a pledge of brotherly love and communion; that all "worthy" partakers are as a matter of fact morally affected and improved by it in much the same way, and to much the same extent,—will be found, when confronted with general unbelief, to be facts of such surpassing and vital importance, that different opinions about the mode of Christ's Presence, or the working of the moral influence, or the proper ritual observance, will seem comparatively insignificant. Most true it is that time was when disagreement upon these points implied, or accompanied, opinions of religion and theories of human life and nature, the importance of a right decision as to which cannot be exaggerated. But it is necessary now that Christian people should see that this has passed away. The sea indeed tosses, but the gale has blown itself out. Protestants may indeed affirm that Rome remains the same, but it is equally true, and more to the purpose, that her power of working injury is departing from her. The progress of liberty, of science, and of confidence in human progress, is neutralizing her influence. The moment that a Church ceases to be able to coerce (I am very far from asserting that this is yet as true of the Church of Rome as it ought to be), and is obliged to enter into free competition with other religious communities, her doctrines lose the only power that Liberals need recognise as dangerous. And on the other hand it is not from Roman doctrines alone that the present reaction is taking place, but from much of what is called distinctively Protestant theology. The Thirty-nine Articles fare in these days but little better than the decrees of the Council of Trent. It is not that they are untrue, but that they are obsolete. They cannot breathe

in the intellectual atmosphere which science creates. They, and similar Protestant Confessions of Faith, belong to a period of thought, a scheme of divinity, and a school of philosophy, all of which are yielding to a new order of things, and the removal of which has an intimate relation to democratic progress. Therefore it is that religious truth presented under these conditions wears a singularly unreal and unimpressive aspect to the working man, who has no sympathy, and indeed no acquaintance, with the state of things from which they come. A formulary like the Apostles' Creed exactly suits his comprehension, and no less exactly meets his religious wants. But disputes about the Real Presence hide away the thing itself from the sight of men's eyes. Disputes about Justification by Faith within the Church obscure divine truth in the case of men who are endeavouring to justify themselves by works without the Church upon a scale, and with at least a temporary success, never before witnessed. And so the effect of our religious teaching is, that we offer to the man who lies plundered and dying upon the road, not the wine and oil which are the healing balm of humanity, but some patent medicine of our own, for which we claim that it is the sole and universal remedy. This it is which makes men feel that religion as presented to them is so unreal, unpractical, inoperative, and unsuitable to their lives and temptations. This is the secret of that protest which they make in words so familiar to every minister of religion—"I have led a good life, and done no harm to any one." In that perpetual controversy between the clergyman and his poor parishioners, are we quite sure that all the truth is on one side?

(3.) Another source of theological weakness arises from doctrines either false, or so perverted and "petrified" as to become false to the people at large. I take first of all, as profoundly repugnant to the moral convictions of the Demos, the doctrine of eternal punishment as it is commonly held and taught. It is no part of the purpose of this volume to discuss what is the truth of this or of any other doctrine, merely as such, or indeed whether any view, of whatever school of theology, which pretends to give an exhaustive and satisfactory account of the moral conditions of the future state, can have any pretensions to be styled true. But I here record my emphatic testimony to the fact that this doctrine is hated, and at the same time feared, by the "common people" to an extent of which we have little conception. The good-natured and amiable clergyman who preaches it from his pulpit, and tricks it out with such rhetoric as his resources command, little knows what harm he may be doing to some excitable and attentive listener. The preacher himself holds it with a thousand drawbacks and difficulties. He knows that he must take into account the case of unbaptized children, of children baptized but left in practical heathenism, of virtuous heathen, and that (to him) hardest case of all, of men who live in the practice of the purest morality without a belief in the Christian revelation. He knows, too, that there is at least another aspect of the future life presented to us in the New Testament. But his words fall in all their naked simplicity perhaps upon the ears of men who are easily moved by the pleadings of love, but all whose notions of manliness and dignity revolt at the thought of being coerced by fear. Or more probably they fall upon the

ears of some one whom vice has converted into a coward. He goes out a changed man, full of the terrors of the unknown world. He believes himself to be in danger of hell-fire, and as it is a most awful reality to him, he must needs warn his fellow-workmen, with coarse importunity, of their common danger, and preach to them the Gospel of an almost universal damnation. These know their comrade but too well, understand at once the paltry motive, the enfeebled morality, the profound immorality of the whole; and they know that nine times out of ten he becomes within six months as much a reprobate as ever. No wonder they hate the religion of which they only see this parody; and yet they fear while they hate, because they are conscious that they are living without God in the world. When persons talk of the use of fear as an instrument of conviction, they apparently forget that in the far more numerous cases where fear does not convince it acts as one of the strongest repelling forces that exist in human nature, and passes invariably into an intensity of hatred and aversion. Certainly the defence of the doctrine of eternal punishment as a useful "economy" is the worst possible ground to take: the individual is converted to a questionable religion, the class is alienated from the highest and purest truths. I know from experience that the instinctive dread of this doctrine shuts the heart of many a dying and conscience-stricken wretch against the Gospel of love. Men must be approached, not with a definite set of theological doctrines upon such a vast and mysterious subject, but with (it is difficult to find a suitable word) an idea, in which hope predominates and fear mingles, the fear of sinfulness working out its own punishment in future

ages, the hope of a work to be continued, a life to be lived out, a character to be developed, it may be a new chance to be allowed us, under such conditions as shall be prescribed by the justice of God.

(4.) I pass on to notice two samples of the obstacles to the spread of Christian truth arising respectively from the intellectual and moral faithlessness of its advocates. Both are so well known, and so frequently denounced, that I need do no more than indicate the effect they produce on the religious instincts of the Demos. We know that the popular sentiment of the Church, disguising a profound faithlessness under the garb of orthodoxy, has ever desired an outward infallibility, by which it has sought to "conclude" all theological progress. Instead of spreading out her sails to meet, and escape by meeting, the approaching gale, the ship of the Church, freighted with the precious cargo of religious truth, has been anchored upon a lee shore by a single cable, the infallibility of Popes, or of Councils, or of the Bible. In our own day and country we see the result of this timid policy; the doctrine of Plenary Inspiration has broken like packthread before the rising gales of scientific discovery and historical research, and in a moment the good ship is tossing amid the breakers, "with much hurt and damage not only of the lading and ship, but also of our own lives." In plain words, the mass of mankind has been taught to believe that the Bible was not only incapable of error, but was a sufficient guide in matters relating to natural science; and when first the real truth dawns upon them, there is naturally a terrible revulsion. Men who know at least as much Geology as is contained in the pages of Hugh Miller, or who have heard and taken

note of the story of Galileo *contra Ecclesiam*, are enabled to hold and even to preach this doctrine without much harm to themselves. They are compelled to acknowledge difficulties, to reconcile varying truths, to make allowances, to fall back on metaphor, or visions, or that last resource of theologians in distress, the poetic genius of the Hebrew language. But the men to whom this doctrine is preached have received it in all simplicity of heart, and are incapable of understanding the refinements by which it is explained away. To us it may seem astonishing that difficulties about the scientific value of the Book of Genesis should injure a Christian's faith in the revelation contained in the New Testament; but an infidel street lecturer, as I myself know, is perfectly aware that if he can start some such difficulty by questions to us so absurd as "Who was the wife that Cain married?" he has seriously damaged the belief of his bewildered hearers. Practically careless as they may be about religion, they have nevertheless certain "idols," such as the infallibility of the Bible or Sabbath-keeping, and if these are broken, almost the last tie that binds them to Christianity is broken also. And yet broken every idol in the long run must be, because it is the creation of a timid faithlessness, that regards merely visible consequences, takes refuge in the letter rather than in the spirit, and believes in the past without daring to hope for the future.

(5.) Closely allied with this is the moral defect to which I have alluded. The one danger to which theology has always been exposed, and to which it has not seldom succumbed, is the temptation to divide religion from morality in the supposed interests, and to meet the pressing wants, of the former. At this very

moment popular theories as to the Atonement, the usual defence for the conduct and character of the heroes of the Old Testament, much of the ordinary views of religious graces and virtues, the hateful expression "mere morality," the unnatural and "inhuman" aspect in which the history of religion in the Bible and in the Church is presented to us, are painful evidences of what I am asserting. "You seem to me," said a working man, "to make God out like a very bad man." It is easy to say that we can see at once the real disingenuousness of this remark, and the obvious want of any searching interest in the subject which it evinces. Still these are the men we have to deal with, and this is what they think and say. And however much the fault may be theirs, that does not take away our responsibility. We assume towards them, as we are bound to do, the position of teachers, and we preach to them a religion which is the sternest rebuke of their lives and beliefs. We must therefore be prepared to meet the jealous scrutiny with which they will inevitably test our claims upon their allegiance, and the fatal accuracy with which they will fasten on the weak points in our teaching. And because morality is common ground to us and them, therefore by such morality as they possess they will try the religion which professes to be the expression of the divine goodness. And thus, as ever, may we hope that the very seriousness of the danger which menaces Christianity will prove its safeguard. For the alienation of the Demos will compel us to examine closely into the defective parts of our system, in order that the people themselves may then take their place in the Church, of which they have first of all compelled the reformation.

The mention of the word reformation suggests one closing remark. It is sometimes applied with perfect propriety to describe the religious change through which we are now passing. For there are two conditions necessary to a religious reformation on a large scale;—in the first place, a deep-rooted alienation of the people, or of some powerful section of the people, from the religion of the day, such as was witnessed in the eras of Tetzel and Hoadley; and, in the second place, the rising of a new force from without calculated powerfully to affect religious thought, such as the revival of learning which preceded the Reformation, or the triumph of civil and religious liberty which made the Wesleyan movement possible. At this present moment there is, as we have seen, a distinct alienation of the Demos from Christianity, but as this does not now proceed, as it did in the days of Luther and Wesley, from the popular protest against moral corruption or practical infidelity within the Church itself, we shall find that the new Reformation, though equally searching and thorough, will nevertheless assume a comparatively peaceful and gradual form. The second Reformation will be to the first much what the Reform Bill of 1867 was to its predecessor of 1832. Nevertheless the "scientific mind," together with all the other elements of progress, will kill many old dogmatic formularies as effectually as the Hellenic view of life and thought slew the mediæval theology. The present "Catholic" reaction in the Church of England will avail ultimately to stem the current in England, just as much and just as little as the Catholic revival, of which Ignatius Loyala stands as the representative, did on the Continent. Protestants and Catholics may indeed, and a sad sight it is

to see, continue their ancient controversies and try to breathe life into worn out disputes, but a power greater than both is threatening to absorb them. When for instance a man of the recognised ability of the Archbishop of York speaks of the dangers to which our "beloved Church" is exposed from the doctrines or practices of the Ritualist party, we seem to see that the instinct of statesmanship is departed from the English Church. Israel and Judah persist in fighting out their ancient border feuds, while the armies of Assyria and Egypt are gathering upon the frontiers. Let us hope that this somewhat ill-omened comparison may not be further illustrated by a Babylonish captivity, as the last method of reuniting the Church and taking away her idols.

We will however turn rather to the brighter side, and proclaim that the religion of Christ is essential to the future welfare of the Democracy. I am as little disposed as any man to regard with forebodings the great change of 1867, or to speak with anything but confidence of the future. Nevertheless no man, not absolutely a liberal fanatic, can disguise from himself that we are about to try an experiment, new in the history of our country, new moreover in the history of the world. We are about to entrust the destinies of this nation to a democracy composed of "working men," as different as possible from the Demos of Athens, or the Plebs. of Rome. Hard manual labour, the ceaseless toil for daily bread, brings with it, questionless, many restraining and ennobling influences, but it brings with it also many palpable and most dangerous temptations. Men whose lot in life is so disposed have but little time

for self-education, for the exercise of quiet thought, for elevating and purifying recreation. There is an inevitable tendency to coarseness, to impatience of spirit, to degrading amusements. All the ancient beauty of thought and feeling that hallowed the commonest occupation, that made princesses do the work of housemaids, and swineherds act the part of gentlemen, has long ago vanished, and labour while growing in worth, in power and in earnestness of purpose, has lost much of its ancient grace in men's eyes, and something of its elevating and beautifying association. And therefore God in His providence has given us the Christian religion, that a moral influence more powerful than poetry, or art, or freedom itself, may be brought to bear upon the "sons and daughters of toil;" may cheer and alleviate their lot, may sanctify their daily work. These considerations will suggest to us the direction in which the new Reformation should be guided. By teaching religion as obedience to a Living Person, Whose work and character has been revealed in history, we can appeal to the best instincts of the working man, his susceptibility of personal influence, his enthusiastic loyalty towards those in whom he trusts, an imagination easily interested, affections readily enlisted by the account of noble things well done and bravely suffered. We must proclaim that Christ is Head and King not merely of the Church, but of the world; that He has a direct interest in scientific as in religious progress, in civilization as in evangelization; that, in a sense of which a timid religiousness never dreamt, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. We must insist upon the truth that work is part of the religion which man owes

to the King of men. We must hallow the occupation of manual labour, just as the professions of medicine or justice are hallowed, by a thousand Christian associations. We must vindicate for mechanical toil the same intimate connexion with religious ideas that has ever bound together religion and the calling of the shepherd or the farmer; and we must see in the factory, no less than in the vineyard or the corn-field, a true picture of the eternal relations between God and man. And we must look forward, in however remote a future, to a state of things in which it shall not seem unnatural or absurd, to think of the Church as having discovered America, or of the world as having built Westminster Abbey.

Very vain and visionary as these dreams of the future may appear to practical men, they are nevertheless akin to the views that animate all the healthiest practical working of the present day. Science, for instance, of whose arrogance divines speak so confidently, would be crushed by the sense of its own ignorance in comparison with the problems to be solved, if it were not sustained by the hope of discovering the last secrets of life and force. And exactly the same thing may be said of the spirit of the age as seen in one who is in England its foremost representative. We can see that Mr. Mill's sense of the folly and weakness of human nature, his insight into human depravity and wickedness, would afflict him with a mere blank despair, if he had not realized to himself a condition of society towards which mankind is fitfully progressing; and it is precisely because of this that the philosopher of the nineteenth century can dedicate his time and thoughts to the

commonest practical questions, to the merest details of legislation. Surely every consideration that Christian men hold dear should impel us to the same practical work in the same hopeful spirit. We are the "children of the prophets," heirs of the boundless future in which their spirits dwelt, of the gladdening and encouraging hopefulness by which their hearts were consoled and animated. When all the world is hoping, Christians must not—dare not—set the example of despair.

II.

THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE.

THIS title, the Voluntary Principle, might fairly represent, according to the customary use of terms, a wide and various range of subjects. It might stand for the whole case of those who object to a State-Church. It might engage us in difficult and slippery discussions as to the nature of religion and its relations to the individual conscience and to the life of a community, and in those general inquiries concerning the province and duties of the State, which all modern philosophers regard as at once fundamental and practically urgent.

But we may speak of the Voluntary Principle without using the term in this loose representative sense. It has a stricter meaning, though the phrase, it is true, is a somewhat intangible one, and, like conscience, or liberty, lends itself easily to equivocation. The Voluntary Principle may be otherwise rendered, I presume, the principle of free choice in matters relating to worship. And I wish to inquire in the following pages how the principle of free choice stands related to the existing conditions of religious societies in this country, where and in what respects it is active, how it is restrained, and in what directions it may be desirable to widen its field.

The inquiry will be considerably narrowed, if we assume that the question is being discussed amongst those who hold in common some form of the Christian Faith. It is true that this question involves interests which non-Christians and Christians may jointly desire to promote, and may reasonably consider together the best means of promoting; and it is not to be taken for granted that those who utterly reject the faith of the Church must wish to see the Church separated from the State. While some, with M. Renan, may think a national form of religion the worst of all forms in which religion can be organized, others may think, as Hume did, that the influence of the State in controlling and benumbing the religious activity to which human nature is so prone is invaluable. It is by no means certain by what policy liberty, in the sense dear to philosophical minds, would be best guaranteed. This is one point which we have to consider. But those who believe in the substantial truth of what calls itself the Gospel must have this faith so near to them, and affecting so strongly all their views when they are estimating the policy of connecting religion with the State, that they are likely to discuss this question with less reserve and more freedom and reality if they approach it with the common understanding that they are agreed in being Christians. This is the character almost without exception of the professed and active adherents of the Voluntary Principle. The non-Christian philosophers do not care to call themselves Voluntaryists, and are not at the present moment very eager for this liberation of religion from the trammels of the State. The zealous advocates of "Free Churches" are to be found in the

great nonconformist bodies which willingly call themselves Evangelical, and place the cause of the Gospel of Christ above every other human interest.

It is less difficult now than it would have been in other days to treat this subject dispassionately. From various causes the excitement of conflict has been tamed on both sides. Dissenters have been relieved from their grievances until they are no longer stung and embittered by a sense of oppression. Churchmen have been trained by what they have seen for many years in the United States and in the Colonies to look without horror and despair upon the separation of religion from the State. They know that branches of their own Church can live and flourish without State-support; they have only to look to Ireland to see how little State-support of itself can do to give life to a Church or to make it a blessing to a land. Zealous members of the Church are already hankering after some of the advantages which a Church seems to enjoy in being independent of the State. This readiness to parley with the Voluntary Principle, and the absence of eagerness to maintain the rights of the State-Church, have led many to the conclusion that we are tending surely, perhaps rapidly, to the adoption of the voluntary system in this country. But if, with a new willingness to study all the bearings of this question, and with the fixed understanding that personal rights and liberties must receive the utmost possible consideration, the Christians of England are on the whole convinced by experience and reflection that neither the commonwealth, nor religion, nor the freedom of the individual conscience, would gain by the dissolution of the old ties which unite the Anglican Church to the

Crown and the Law, that opinion may turn out to have been a mistake.

It is hardly necessary to premise, that the course of things in this respect will be here, as it must be everywhere, controlled by the progress of theological opinion. If the greater part of the active and ruling intelligence of the country should decisively turn away from the Christian faith, or from that form of it which is represented by the Church of England, it will be idle to consider whether the Church should remain established. At least, the ground will be clear for theorists who are inclined to speculate with Lord Amberley whether some kind of national union might not be formed to embrace all varieties of Christian and non-Christian belief. At present, every considerable religious society would decline to enter such a union. A National Church therefore we assume to be possible only where a certain creed is professed by a majority of the nation. In the United States, an established Church is out of the question. Within the bounds of the British Empire, uncertainties on this point arise out of a previous uncertainty whether this or that portion of the Empire is to be regarded as simply a small part of one great country, or as a country within a country. No one would dream of defending the Anglican Establishment in Ireland, except on the assumption that Ireland is to be regarded as a part of England. If we are compelled to give up the notion of treating Ireland as if it were a large English county, and to allow that her religion and language and history give her the most important elements of a distinct nationality, then the very grounds on which we hold to a National

Church in England will forbid us to impose a non-national Church upon Ireland. What the progress of religious thought in England may be, is a subject on which most persons will prophesy according to their own prepossessions; but it is at least a tenable opinion that amongst the various tendencies which are now struggling together in the English mind, the broad historical faith of the Church of England will rather gain than lose.

Assuming then that we have to deal with a population which adheres, at least in the way of acquiescence, to the ancient Creed of Christendom, let us try to compare the Church and the Dissenting organizations as to their respective bearings upon that freedom of the conscience of which the Voluntary Principle claims to be the exponent or the guardian. Freedom of conscience, if it is anything more than an idle boast, should manifest itself in earnestness and independence of theological inquiry, in delicacy and spirituality of religious sentiment, in breadth and apprehensiveness of sympathy, in spontaneous activity. Nonconformist organs are accustomed to reproach the Church with being secularized by State-control. The touch of the State, they say, paralyses the higher religious life. In what is political and material Churchmen may thrive, they may wax fat and kick; in spiritual matters it is little blame to them if they are dead. The free nonconformist bodies breathe a purer and higher air; they are therefore naturally less worldly, more spiritual, more in the habit of keeping the life of faith and worship untainted by considerations of interest or favour. Churchmen, on the other hand, are very apt to speak as if religion depended on endowments, and as if to touch an income were

sacrilege. In the mere conservative desire to keep every advantage of property or rank of which the Church may without design have become possessed, they exaggerate, to say the least, what property and rank can do in the sphere of the conscience, and so give very fair excuse to Dissenters for representing the Church as a great worldly institution which carries on its warfare with carnal weapons. It is not to be denied that a richly endowed establishment is exposed to peculiar evils, or that the Church of England has been hideously marred by them. But to have property is not to be altogether corrupt; to be without it is not necessarily to be pure.

One mode of inquiring in what ways and to what extent spiritual freedom is encouraged, in the Church of England, and in a nonconformist society, will be to observe the conditions in the midst of which two persons would find themselves growing up, of whom the one should be born a Churchman, the other a Dissenter.

Let A then, be an infant born in a Church of England amily. Without his leave being asked, he is immediately baptized into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He was not asked whether he would be born; he is not asked whether he will be christened. He did not choose his own parents; he does not choose his own religion. Having had their son baptized, his parents go on to teach him in accordance with his baptism. He learns the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. He is taken to church. He finds the same liturgy always used. When he asks why the prayers are always the same, whilst the sermon varies, he is told that they are the appointed prayers, having a venerable history which is more or less im-

parted to him, but sure to be always used because the law of the land prescribes that they shall be. He becomes acquainted with the clergyman of the parish, and learns that the parish belongs in a sense to the clergyman, and that the clergyman, though in some respects under the bishop, is both controlled and sustained in the parish by the supreme authority, the law of the land. Possibly his parents do not profess to agree heartily with the clergyman; they may attend another church than that of the parish: but the rector remains the rector, and the people make no attempt to dispossess him. In any case A. if a sharp boy, finds out from conversation and from what he reads that there are considerable differences between clergymen, and that some people like one sort of clergyman and others another sort, and that often great grief and anger are caused by these differences, but that the people have to make the best of it, for the clergy have their rights, and, like other Englishmen, know how to exercise them.

As the boy grows up, his reverence for his Church and his reverence for the law and history of his country become inextricably mingled. His country is Christian to him, his Church is national. He chooses neither the one nor the other; he inherits both, he learns to reverence both. The Bible is put into his hands, as the most sacred and authoritative of all books. As he reads the New Testament, he has no image of national life before him. Apparently, within the limits of the New Testament histories there was no such thing as a nation. But perhaps he does not notice this fact, because other than national interests are presented to his mind in this volume. But he reads the Old Testament also, and finds

much in that volume to excite his youthful imagination; and there everything is national. The Old Testament is the ancient national library of one people. The Jews were in covenant with God, not as individuals, but as a people. They were a nation because God had expressly made them one. Their government was a Divine ordinance; their worship was their highest national duty. All their righteousness was national; all their sins were anti-national. Politics and theology with them were identical rather than inseparable. The Jewish hymns, which have fed the the devotion of universal Christendom, were the songs of patriots who thought more of their country's hopes than of their own. The Bible therefore does not suggest the possibility of a true nation not acknowledging God. It exhibits the Church of Christ taking root in the world whilst a godless Empire was dissolving and absorbing nations; but the only nation of which it speaks to us (and to the history of that its greater portion is dedicated), is one which was in the strictest conceivable covenant with God. In the same book which thus upholds the sacredness of the nation, the youthful reader finds non-political religious bodies represented as animated by the worst spirit and committing the greatest crimes of which the book bears record. So the early prepossessions according to which the Church and country are regarded as ideally coextensive with each other are likely to be strengthened by the devout reading of the Scriptures.

During boyhood, certainly, the youthful member of the Church of England is not encouraged to exercise a free choice. He is taught to consider himself as placed, without choice of his own, in his country and in his

Church. But by the time he is fifteen or sixteen years of age, he is brought into contact with an ordinance which appeals to him as having responsibility not only in matters of conduct but also in matters of faith. He is invited to have the Bishop's hands laid upon him. He may decline if he pleases. If he is willing to be confirmed, the Bishop, before the imposition of hands, asks him whether he in his own person acknowledges himself bound to believe and to do all those things which his godfathers and godmothers undertook for him at his Baptism; and he is required to answer "I do." The principle of personal responsibility is thus affirmed and directly applied. But those who have any knowledge of boys and girls are aware that not much personal choice is exercised at the period of Confirmation. When in manuals or in Bishops' addresses it is assumed that a youth deliberately considers, with a reflective estimate of what is for and against, whether he will be confirmed or not, and that his "I do" is a pledge based upon a thorough inquiry into the grounds of faith and duty, this well-meant endeavour to deepen the sense of responsibility jars upon the consciences of clergymen and parents, and distresses the most truthful and sensitive of the candidates. Well-disposed young persons are confirmed by desire of their natural advisers. I am very far from meaning that the appeal to individual responsibility in Confirmation is a farce. I believe that it often serves, in a most important degree, to awaken the conscience and to stimulate the judgment. The confessions and resolutions incident to this ordinance are a natural beginning of volition and free agency. They bear witness that faith and service, to be acceptable,

must be personal and voluntary. But in a good Church of England family, influence is exerted without misgiving or apology up to and through Confirmation. Those who kneel reverentially before their Bishop have not ceased to be in leading-strings.

Much the same thing may be said of the participation in the Lord's Supper which follows Confirmation. It is always assumed that "taking the sacrament," to be worth anything, must be the voluntary act of a believer. Everything in the service seeks to draw out the will of the worshipper. But their advisers guide the young into what it is presumed they ought to feel; and it would be useless to deny that, even after Confirmation, the religious practices of the younger members of the Church are the result of the wills of others far more than of their own will.

The Churchman thus enters by gradual and generally unconscious steps upon the enjoyment of such spiritual freedom as may belong to his adult life. He becomes aware of the existence of other forms of faith and other religious societies all round him. How far he may be led to do justice to these, will depend upon the circumstances of personal history. To leave the Church and join another body will involve varying degrees of sacrifice; but if he is convinced he ought to do so, the law of the land will not interfere to prevent him. Within the Church, he will find that it is open to him to hold and profess various shades of doctrine. There are grounds for believing, as many do, that the Church of England comprises greater differences of theological opinion than any other religious society. A Churchman may be almost a Romanist, almost a Puritan Dissenter, almost a non-

dogmatic Christian. The formularies of the Church are comparatively simple and plastic; and moreover, as ancient and inherited documents, they are subject to a recognised licence of interpretation which each member of the Church may freely use for his own benefit. Those of the same way of thinking may associate together and cultivate a special voluntary fellowship as much as they please. To one who considers how few and slight the impediments are within the Church to the choosing of opinions or to the taking of sides on the great questions of religious controversy, the Church of England might seem a kind of Liberty Hall. There are, it is true, restraints on the full indulgence of religious preferences. Those of High Church or Low Church predilections cannot have the Church to themselves; High and Low combined cannot have the satisfaction of excluding the Broad. So much is personal liberty favoured in the Anglican Communion, that there are great difficulties in excommunicating even the openly irreligious or immoral. Religious fervour often feels as if cold water were thrown upon it by the necessity of associating with unsympathizing persons. It may therefore be reckoned as a check which operates in some degree to the annoyance of religious minds and to the chilling of free spiritual development, that Churchmen are compelled to share their Church and its services with fellow-members whose opinions they may highly disapprove. It is a serious part of this inconvenience, that even a majority of parishioners, if they gravely dislike the doctrine of the clergyman, have no power to remove him, unless he exceeds the liberty which the law allows. A Churchman may indeed find it very difficult to suit himself

with a spiritual pastor, except by seceding from the Church.

Against the freedom, therefore, which a Churchman enjoys for himself, must be set a want of power to restrain the freedom of others. The power which Englishmen may exercise in the Church resembles that which they may exercise in the State. It is diffused and works slowly. A Churchman may use various means of influencing opinion. He may urge forward a clergyman by his aid and encouragement, or keep him back by his opposition. He may support, both singly and in associations, any cause which attracts his sympathy. He may apply what political power he possesses to the support or the hindrance of any ecclesiastical movement. In the long run, Churchmen have power to do what they will with the organization of the Church, as Englishmen have power to do what they please with the Army. But in ordinary times the results of their activity are not near and distinct enough to them to encourage them to general or persistent exertion.

Now let us consider the circumstances of a born Nonconformist with reference to spiritual freedom. Let B, our representative Dissenter, be born of pious Congregationalist parents. B, like A, is baptized in his early infancy. That is, he inherits his religion from his parents. The tendency to regard baptism as an act of dedication, dependent for its virtue upon the faith and prayers of the parents, rather than as a divinely-authorized act of admission to a spiritual kingdom, makes the religion of the young Nonconformist more expressly hereditary than that of the Churchman. Congregationalists have a creed which they have received from their fathers; and though

they have not formulated it as a symbol binding on all who claim to belong to their denomination, they consider it a matter of the highest importance that the doctrines of their creed should be held purely and strongly. The theological authorities of Congregationalism are peculiarly dogmatic. As the society professess to be based upon agreement in opinion, it is natural that opinions should come into prominence. The child B, therefore, is strictly brought up in the religious doctrines of the society. These are what are commonly called Evangelical,—such as the acceptance of the Bible as a complete and final authority, the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, the necessity of conversion and the hopeless future of those who die unconverted, and reverence for the Sabbath-day. The external objects which the children of Evangelical denominations are brought up to worship with an unquestioning reverence are the Bible and the Sabbath-day: but in societies which divide mankind into the two sections of the converted and the unconverted, so long as religious fervour remains, the necessity of conversion is the dogma which will spread like a firmament over youthful life. B is taught that the Church of Christ consists of the truly converted, and that he must hope and pray to be converted himself. Till this change takes place, he is not in the Church, and can have no hope of salvation. It cannot be said that the principle of free choice is comforted or flattered in him. He may choose for himself;—but if he does, he is lost. His one hope is to submit to God's choice of him, and to consent to be taken by God's guidance through the strait gate along the narrow way. There is a stern grandeur in this teaching and discipline, but it is sufficiently imperious.

B is taken regularly to chapel, and becomes by degrees acquainted with the constitution of the Congregationalist society. He learns that those whose worship he joins are not one body, but two. There is the "Church," and the Congregation outside the "Church." The Church consists of those who after due profession and inquiry are accepted as true believers. The Church is what is called a close corporation; it elects into its own body. In practice there are various degrees of stringency in the examination to be passed, according to the strictness or laxity of the Church. But it is always necessary to make a personal profession of being a believer, and to satisfy the Church, in the person of its representatives, that the profession is genuine. The theory of the Church therefore is that it is the body of the regenerate, separated from the world. It is the holy society taken out from an unholy people. It is the business of all who are in earnest to keep this society pure from any admixture of the world, by a due provoking of one another to love and good works, and by a rigorous exclusion of unworthy elements.

It may without offence be taken as certain, that the young Nonconformist will not find either the characters of the persons with whom he becomes acquainted, or the language and behaviour of his parents concerning such persons, correspond precisely with the theoretical distinction between the Church and the world. Church-members, we know, do not all commend themselves as childlike Christians; nor can all the unconverted be easily regarded as belonging to the ungodly. But this distinction is that which peculiarly offers itself as the glory of his denomination to the religiously educated

Dissenter. He will be conversant with arguments in favour of this distinction drawn from its usefulness in promoting religion; but the great support of it is the authority of the New Testament. It is this which overpowers many difficulties in the eyes of the Evangelical denominations which desire above all things to be scriptural. When B therefore arrives at years of discretion, his society questions him, "Are you converted, or are you not? If you say you hope you are, we will do our best to determine whether you have judged rightly, and we will gladly admit you, if approved, into our communion. If you do not claim to be born again, or if we have serious doubts whether you are, you must remain for the present outside." B, in his position as a Congregationalist, cannot evade this inquiry and alternative. Either he must go through the narrow portal, professing precisely the creed handed down in the society, and consenting to have his convictions and his motives probed by the authorities of the society, or the Church will not know him as a member, and in many cases will not call him a Christian.

But if we are to go further with B as a genuine Nonconformist, we must suppose him to have become a Church-member. And then he begins to share in various powers,—especially in one of the greatest importance in a religious community,—that of appointing and paying and deposing his pastor. But he carries out his will in this and other matters on one condition,—that he go with the majority or carry the majority with him. If he is in the minority, it appears that his liberty consists in voting in the minority. It appears also that the Chapels in which particular con-

gregations meet, and which are valuable property, are apt to be protected by trust-deeds which are drawn up with a view to the preservation of purity of doctrine; and some Voluntaryists see in such trust-deeds an intrusion of the establishment principle. But apart from any difficulty on this score, the majority of a Church have, according to the congregationalist constitution, great freedom to make the Church what they like, by engaging a minister to their mind, by admitting into their corporation members who sympathize with them, and by excluding those who may seem to them of a different spirit.

This form of power is what is chiefly meant by the Voluntary Principle. It is the power of a close corporation to exercise inexpressible control by the vote of the greater number in matters relating to their own faith and worship. It is the power of the majority, applied directly and immediately in a society not numbering more than a few hundreds. Against this power individuals have no appeal. The alternative offered them, if they are unwilling to submit to the majority, is that of breaking off and forming another society.

Practically, no doubt, the will of the majority is not accustomed to ride roughshod over the feelings and views of the minority. The power of a Free Church to do what it likes, besides its own greater or less willingness to be guided by what it judges to be "reason and the will of God," is kept in check by mere external influences. The most important of these is probably public opinion. This is a power of which no voluntary society can boast to be independent. Then there is the natural reluctance to break up a society. What an energetic minority can do by threats of secession to

influence the policy of the whole body is shown by the history of the United States before the civil war. And the legal rights which grow up inevitably with the corporate possession of property,—such for example as may be secured by the trust-deeds of chapels,—must interpose considerable obstacles to the free action of the power of the majority. But in proportion as this power is controlled, the peculiar freedom of the Free Church is modified. Establishment principles kept out at one gate, enter in by another. The luxuriant locks of nonconformist vigour are shorn unawares by national and legal interference.

Voluntaryism is not confined to Congregationalists. There are many religious societies throughout the world unconnected with the State, laying down their own terms of membership, and allowing none but their regularly admitted members to interfere in what concerns their faith and worship. But, in the first place, the assertion of Voluntaryism as a sacred principle may be said to be almost peculiar to Congregationalists. One of their organs observes: "The voluntary movement, the inauguration of which most of us remember, was due to the increased powers of which Dissenters became conscious, after the passing of the first Reform Bill of 1832, and the conviction that they ought to exert that power for the overthrow of what their noblest men had always deemed to be a national sin, and the most fertile cause of the corruption of true religion." (*The Freeman*, Dec. 27th, 1867.) And in the next place, the system of Congregationalism illustrates most properly the kind of freedom which it is the boast of the Voluntary Principle to promote. Independent con-

gregations, like city republics, enable their constituent members to be conscious in a high degree of the privileges of self-government. As the size of the self-governing body increases, the power of individual members of it diminishes. Influence which might be omnipotent in a village, may seem almost lost in London. A great society, "which moveth altogether if it move at all," and which has received a hierarchy as a part of its hereditary constitution, may offer almost as few incitements to personal activity as a National Church like the Church of England. Still, in all the Free Churches we observe their freedom to mean—power of action for the majority, not greater liberty of choice for individuals. Colonial Churches, so far as they rejoice in their freedom, are more likely to use it in expelling than in fostering Colensos.

Thus far, in discussing the question of freedom, we have followed the example of nonconformist writers in meaning by freedom that of the lay members of the religious society, and not that of the teachers or ministers or priests. It is always true that the priests exist for the people, and not the people for the priests. But the very fact that the priests exist for the people makes the character of its priests a matter of vital importance to any religious community. Call them pastors and teachers, and it becomes even more evident that in societies professing to live by doctrine and exhortation the interest of the whole body is concerned in nothing so much as the quality of those who teach. What then are the respective conditions, with reference to freedom, of the ministers of the National Church and of the Congregationalist denominations?

The restraints which bind an Anglican clergyman are well known and public. He may preach and publish what he likes, so long as he does not contravene the Articles and the Liturgy of the Church of England; and the decision whether he contradicts these formularies or not rests with Courts of Law, which treat such questions in a judicial rather than religious spirit, and with their whole bias in favour of personal liberty. The amount of the freedom conferred by this subjection to law is to be easily and directly estimated by the varieties of theological opinion which exist amongst the English clergy. Practically, this freedom is not equally distributed. A clergyman has the full advantage of it when he occupies a benefice or any other position which ranks as a freehold. Assistant curates depend for their incomes upon satisfying an incumbent, and a change of opinion may involve the loss of a curacy. But as incumbents are very numerous and of all shades of opinion, a curate is seldom put to more than temporary inconvenience by this dependence. And in no case have *the people* any recognised power to remove a clergyman from his post because they do not approve of his doctrines.

Under the congregationalist system, on the contrary, the people choose, maintain, and may remove, their minister. Before he is appointed, they take pains to assure themselves that he is, according to their judgment, sound in the faith. They then carefully watch his doctrine. When the preacher is able and high-minded, and the people considerate and docile, the relations established between them may be those of a faithful teacher and admiring learners. Special gifts in a minister make his congregation proud of him, and

they are interested in treating him with respect and confidence. So that Congregationalists may probably assert with truth that the minister is very often not made to feel his subjection painfully. But it equally remains the very boast of the system, that the minister is the *employé* of the "Church," engaged by them to teach the doctrine they want, and knowing that, in case of a change in his opinions, he must either change theirs too, or expect to be dismissed.

It is superfluous to argue that a Church of England clergyman has a larger freedom, in respect of variety of opinions, than an Independent or a Baptist minister. In the eyes of all strict religionists, whether Roman Catholics or Protestant Dissenters, the theological freedom of the Anglican clergyman is a notorious scandal. It is not unusual for Nonconformists to make this their chief objection to the Church. A Church which contains both Ritualists and Rationalists shocks all their ideas of "separateness" and of ecclesiastical discipline. They cannot conceive how Evangelicals can bear to be fellow-Churchmen with men holding views which they believe to be so mischievous.

But Nonconformists have become so accustomed to ring the changes upon "freedom," and to claim it as their own property in all its shapes, that they not only pity the Church for its want of power to enforce the opinions of the majority on all its clergy, but they sometimes (inadvertently, one would suppose) pity the clergy also as being held in a peculiar bondage. Speaking of the celebrated Feathers' Tavern Petition for the abolition of subscription to the Articles, Mr. Skeats, in a recent History of the Free Churches of England, observes,

"The clergy could not reasonably have expected exemption. 'Church Establishments and liberty of thought cannot co-exist; or, if they do, those in the Church who exercise that liberty will always expose themselves to a reasonable suspicion of their intellectual, if not of their moral, dishonesty. One of the first objects of the Established Church in England, and one of the reasons of its foundation, was to limit the liberty of opinion respecting theological and ecclesiastical subjects, and to do so by two methods—first, by conferring pay and privilege on those who would come into the terms of the State; and secondly, by punishing all who would not accept those terms. The petitioning clergy had both pay and privilege: it was hardly to be expected that they should have liberty as well" (pp. 457, 458). It is perfectly true that a clergyman's liberty is circumscribed, and free-thinking laymen have a right to taunt him with his bondage; but it is difficult to understand how clerical liberty can seem small to any minister or member of a congregationalist church. The more natural and consistent course for Nonconformists is to echo the cry, that the freedom of the clergy is the bondage of the laity; and the feeling of the more thoughtful and less rhetorical of the Congregationalists about clerical liberty is probably that expressed in the following passage from a Dissenting organ already quoted: "One of the great dangers ahead of Voluntaryism is the probability, that between legal decisions and Acts of Parliament, the State-Church will become a Church of every creed. 'Liberty of prophesying' would then be sure to attract the most vigorous thinkers and the ablest preachers, while it would naturally allure the young, who are ever prone

to novelty and freedom of thought."—(*The Freeman*, Dec. 27, 1867.)

So far, then, as the Voluntary Principle means the power to do as one likes in matters of religion, and freedom means the absence of restraints on the will in the same sphere, it results from what has been said that these terms must be appropriated with discrimination. The Congregationalist enjoys the liberty which belongs to small republics, namely, the unrestrained exercise of the power of the majority in a small sphere,—a liberty highly stimulating to personal activity. The Churchman enjoys the liberty of being controlled by no smaller power than the public action of a great commonwealth.

But though a large proportion of the appeals of Voluntaryists are made to the more vulgar love of liberty, which covets the pleasure of doing as one likes, the better and more religious thought of the Dissenters is aiming at a kind of freedom which depends essentially not on the indulgence, but on the conquest, of self-will. It is impossible for devout nonconformist Christians to forget that self-will, instead of being an object to be cultivated, is a bondage from which man needs to be emancipated; that the liberty of the children of God is not to be attained by making it easy for every man to do what is right in his own eyes, but by the determined submission of the will to what is best. I wonder that such men can find pleasure in a name like the Voluntary Principle,—a name so suggestive of self-will; I cannot imagine St. Paul appearing as a champion of it. But it is evident that religious Dissenters persuade themselves that the conditions of a State-Church are unfavourable to the consecration of the will to God; that instead of

encouraging, they hinder, that "service" of God, which is "perfect freedom."

To enter upon a discussion of the truth of this conviction is to rise into a higher atmosphere than that of ordinary Church and State controversy. I venture to think it would be well for us to accustom ourselves more to this elevation. The conflict of British democratic insolence asserting its rights of equality, with British aristocratic insolence insisting upon its rights of possession, is not an edifying one, nor worthy to determine the future of the English Church or the English State. We should have a better ground of policy, if we could learn under what *régime*, whether that of a National Church or that of Free Churches unconnected with the State, true spiritual freedom is likely to be brought to its highest perfection. This question is hardly one to be settled conclusively, even by a more adequate investigation than is possible in these few pages; but it will be worth while to offer some elements of the inquiry to the consideration of the reader.

There are many facts, unhappily, to which Nonconformists can point in illustration of the anti-spiritual influences of State-connexion on the Church. But they are evidently possessed by a theory, which tells more strongly upon their minds than the evidence of facts. I find this theory very well stated in a little pamphlet entitled "Some Reasons why Nonconformists cannot Conform," published at Wolverhampton after the Church Congress in 1867. "The Scriptural idea of a Christian Church implies on the part of Christ's disciples *separateness*. They are to be in the world, but not of it. They are supposed to be united together by the bond of a

common belief and a common aim,—to possess, and to exercise, disciplinary power for the exclusion of the unbelieving or undevout, and by their conduct and their spirit to set an example to those that are without. . . . In the Church of England these characteristics of a Church are almost wholly wanting. . . . The religious and irreligious form a heterogeneous mass. . . . It cannot be denied that there is a tendency to laxity and to worldliness in all religious communities; but, in the Church of England, such tendencies, instead of being earnestly striven against, are fostered by arrangements which bring to bear upon the Church all the corrupting influences of the world. Thus, the Monarch of the country, no matter how great his ungodliness, is its legally appointed head. A Prime Minister equally irreligious may nominate its Archbishops, Bishops, and other chief functionaries. It is legislated for by a Parliament the composition of which is determined by political rather than religious considerations. Certain, and in many cases large, incomes are secured to the clergy by a legal tenure, irrespective of their competency, or success, or acceptableness. . . . Acts of Parliament are passed to regulate the duties of the clergy, and to compel their performance, as well as to enforce their rights. The laity also, so far as they have any Church rights, can enforce them by legal process. . . . To judges and lawyers are referred questions which properly belong to the Church alone, and which are often too sacred to be the subject of legal technicalities and uncertainties."

"The Scriptural idea of a Christian Church" undoubtedly implies that all its members should be, if they conform to the idea, unworldly disciples of Christ. But

whether the policy of Christian Churches, as we find it illustrated in the New Testament, was to labour always to exclude the undevout and irreligious, is another question. The evidence seems to point to the negative conclusion. The first disciples reported that their Lord had taught "Let the tares and the wheat grow together until the harvest;" that he had allowed such a one as Judas himself to remain a member of the most sacred Christian company. Youthful readers of the New Testament are astonished and shocked to learn that the primitive Churches contained such persons as are complained of in the Epistles of St. Paul, of St. James, of St. John, of St. Jude, and in the Apocalypse: and yet it nowhere appears that the stricter members of these Churches were engaged in a perpetual endeavour to sift out their unworthy members. If that had been the intended policy of the Church, it would have been carried out with especial vigour and confidence under the eye of the Apostles of Christ. But the only hint of excommunication is in the case of a gross external offence, "such fornication as was not so much as named among the Gentiles." The perpetual appeals to the high ideal of a Christian society which recur in the Apostolic writings have led our nonconformist friends to the fallacious conclusion that the first Christians attempted to realize this ideal by a policy of separation,—a conclusion which is wholly disproved by the character of those writings. "These be they who separate themselves" was not said of the spiritual members of the Church.

But the policy of forming a select society,—a close corporation,—of devout believers, and excluding the unbelieving and undevout, though it does not find any

real support in the practice of the New Testament age, is undoubtedly a plausible and attractive one. To the sect-spirit it commends itself as the only religious policy. If we ask, What, on this hypothesis, is to become of the undevout?—the first and most natural answer might be, "That is their concern, not ours. Our business is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world." But it may also be argued that the fact of being themselves excluded, and the spectacle of a body which is like a light shining in a dark place, are calculated to exert the best possible influence upon those who do not make a profession of religion. That this effect may be produced, it is necessary that the Free Churches should be very visibly distinguished by a more heavenly spirit and conduct from the rest of the world. The policy of separatism fails altogether unless it is carried to an extreme; and no religious community dreams now of carrying it to an extreme. To realize the idea of a Christian Church by separation, the members ought to go on cutting off one questionable member after another till the residue are like flawless gems; in practice, the most zealous Nonconformists aim at no such selection of the best, and lay claim to no peculiar Christian perfection. But the theory, though it will not work where it has its proper work to do, is held fast where it flatters the sect-spirit. "The Church" delights to prove that it is not "the world" by governing its affairs in its own way and for its own ends. Zeal and activity are thus developed; religion flourishes. And to "a Church" it seems the ultimate good that religion should flourish; whether the religion is of a good kind or a bad is a question which seldom occurs to those who are animated by the ecclesiastical spirit. Advocates of

Church establishments have been mistaken in contending that where there is no endowed and State-supported Church religion must die out. Voluntary sects undoubtedly tend to stimulate religion. Rivalry, of itself, is a most powerful stimulant. It is natural therefore that those in the Church of England who hold most strongly the ecclesiastical theory and who regard the discipline of exclusion as most essential to the being and vitality of a Church should be the most willing to break loose from what they feel to be the fetters of the State. Nonconformists appear to be delighted with the symptoms of what they call "rudimentary Free Churchism" in the Church of England. They think it inevitable that we should be galled by our bonds. The Church of England, "fevered and restless, sighs and moans for health. Like an imprisoned bird, she beats her breast against the bars of her cage." (*British Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1868, p. 226.) "The fetters, of the existence of which a sleeping Church was scarcely conscious, an awakened Church finds to be galling beyond endurance." ("Reasons why Nonconformists cannot Conform," p. 12.) But who are the Churchmen who thus groan, being burdened? Mr. Bennett of Frome, Archdeacon Denison, the Bishop of Capetown. The grievance is that Bishop Colenso cannot be driven from his office, that Dissenting children cannot be excluded from a Conscience-Clause School. Beyond a doubt, the liberty of excommunication goes well with a certain kind of ecclesiastical activity and fervour.

But is it right or desirable,—is it in accordance with Christian doctrine,—that the State should be treated as a purely human and un-Divine creation? Those who regard the Church as even less Divine than the State,

may reasonably think of the State as purely human. But I cannot understand how any faith which recognises the Church as a Divine ordinance can help seeing in the State a Divine ordinance also. To one bred in a national Church, and fed upon Bible doctrine, it sounds like a mockery of sacred things when Voluntaryists pour their accustomed scorn on the action of the Nation and the law. It sounds strange that men should say, "We make our Church by our own volitions, therefore it is Divine; the State has come down to us from the generations of old, therefore it is human." I take the following illustrations of what I refer to from an article in the *British Quarterly Review*, the leading literary organ of Voluntaryism:—"Religion and nationalism are the infinite and the finite, and the former cannot be bound by the latter." "We do not deny that the Episcopalian sect of Christians is a Christian Church apart from Parliament, but by its present position it is also a parliamentary Church. If our Church friends think that to be a position at all degrading to a Church, there is a short way out of the degradation." Why should it be degrading? Is it so obvious that the British nation is less worthy to legislate for a Church, than that section of it which constitutes the congregationalist denomination? "A mistake more ludicrous and at the same time more disastrous [than the establishment of the Church] it would not be easy to make. Can water be held in a sieve? Can oxygen be picked up by the point of a needle? Can the law of gravitation be held by forceps? Can a mathematical problem be wrought out by a barrel-organ? Can a metaphysical difficulty be solved by nitric acid? or zeal be stirred up by a kitchen poker? or the Alps ascended

in a steam-packet? The attempt at any one of these feats would not be one whit more idiotic than the attempt to settle the religious convictions of a nation by law. Law cannot make truth. Law cannot find truth. Law cannot secure truth. And so, conscience intuitively resents and resists the interference of law in the matter. Conscience is a great Divine force in humanity, whose function is to receive and apply Divine truth to individual human lives. It is like the wind, but mightier than the rushing mighty wind. It is like the tide, but fiercer than the fiercest tempest-tide. Conscience must be free. Rear the most solid wall of law against the wind, and how it puffs it into ruin. Build the highest breakwater in mid-Atlantic, and how it laughs it into wreck. And so conscience must be free. It laughs at human enactments. It may be awed into silence, compelled into submission, into conformity, but never into faith. It must be free or die." (*British Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1858, p. 229.) It is at once a relief and a surprise to find that so terrible a creature can, after all, be awed into silence and compelled into submission. But idiotic persons may be pardoned for asking, why the "human enactments" of the British Parliament,—as, *e.g.*, that a certain Liturgy is to be used in every church of the National Communion,—are more laughable than the resolutions of a Church-meeting? It may be answered, that parliamentary enactments are enforced by penalties, whilst those of ecclesiastical bodies are assumed to depend on moral force. But is it possible to maintain this distinction? Is excommunication no penalty? Does not the dismissal of an uncongenial minister involve the withdrawal of his stipend?

I repeat that the public action of a great historic people is not to be treated as an utterance in which there can be no voice of God. A God-fearing man, who has read with reverence about Moses and David and Hezekiah, and has learnt from St. Paul that the powers that be are ordained of God, will be apt to think as respectfully of the legislation of a commonwealth as of the conscience of an ecclesiastical assembly. Many admissions must be made with sorrow by those who desire to honour the legislature and executive of the British nation. Politicians are too often ambitious and self-seeking. Elections are polluted by bribery and balderdash. But good men will not acquiesce in these taints as innocuous in the matters which Voluntaries would leave to the Parliament and the Cabinet. They hold that it is one of the most sacred duties of Englishmen to strive together against all influences which corrupt political action. And, to speak of late years, neither Nonconformists nor moderate Churchmen will be inclined, I think, to regard the course taken by the State authorities in ecclesiastical or religious matters as on the whole discreditable. The decisions of our law-courts are far more free from suspicion than they would have been if the judges in them had all been ecclesiastics. The appointments made to high posts in the Church have been made with a very considerate regard to the religious feelings and opinions of the public generally. Many most important reforms have been carried through in matters relating to the Church, so that the recent history of this department of legislation may compare not unfavourably with that of any other. Still, the great property interests connected with the Church, and especially the fact that a benefice is a free-

hold possession, shelter all kinds of anomalies and make some scandals very hard to remove. These things, however, are not easy to manipulate in the case of any endowed body; and the Church would certainly not cease to be a rich and great society if it were separated from the State.

Against the acknowledged difficulty of introducing new adjustments into the machinery of the National Church must be set such evils as belong to small and free religious societies. It is possible to exaggerate and to misrepresent those evils. The satire which has revelled in the description of the internal history of little Nonconformist Churches has taken a scarcely fair advantage of the fact that the persons described are petty shopkeepers, whose speech and manners are naturally not those of the cultivated class, and can be made by humorous rendering to appear ridiculous to the readers of satire. Vulgarisms are not always signs of an essential vulgarity. But if justice and good sense would restrain us from adopting the satirical estimate of the deacons and the Church-meetings of the Free Churches, it may also be expected that those who are familiar with the actual working of these small republics should shrink from speaking of them as if purity of Christian motive found in them an ideal shrine. It is evident that in these Churches the direct and daily government, in the sphere of all that is most subtle and delicate and difficult, is put into the hands of ignorant persons. And in the history of religion, the most ignorant have always been the most narrow, and the most inclined to apply other than spiritual pressure in the interests of faith. Persecution has always found its real motive power in the

fears of the religious laity. It seems absolutely inevitable that a congregationalist "Church" should consider itself bound to guard the traditional and popular doctrine of the sect, and therefore to be watchful in measuring the sermons of the pastor by that standard. The pastor has—for good, if you will, but for evil also—the strongest inducements to make his preaching acceptable to his employers. Where a premium is put upon self-will by the worship of the Voluntary Principle and of the power of the majority, it would be singular if there were no development of the evils of self-will. Impress upon a society that it is a glorious thing to say, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ," and it will be unaccountable if such teaching should not result in envying and strife and divisions. And where these fruits are found, a society may be perfectly religious, and yet, in the judgment of an Apostle, thoroughly carnal. Moreover, Congregationalist Churches are subjected to the influence of the principle of competition in all its severity. Each Church is naturally anxious to prosper. It is essential that the pews should be let. Competition is a powerful stimulant, but it is not the most spiritualizing of influences. What will "draw" and what will edify are not always the same thing. A successful Congregationalist therefore deserves especial esteem, if he resists the temptations to claptrap, buncome, and jocularity, which beset him, and preserves in his bearing, not unction, but high-minded spiritual dignity.

The pew-system, it can hardly be denied, has a very ugly look in any Church claiming to be Apostolical. Practically it may not be quite so bad as it looks, and it

certainly has its conveniences. But no one will contend that it illustrates happily the ideal of a Christian Church. But it is the natural attendant of the Voluntary Principle. In company with that principle, it has effected a lodgment in the National Church. But it is not quite at home there, and it thrives most where the Voluntary Principle is least checked. The United States of America exhibit this principle in its full development, and English Voluntaries point to that country as proving its power and its virtues. Mr. H. W. Beecher has lately intimated that it will henceforth be the privilege of Europe to walk in the steps of the United States. He and those who think with him may justly claim credit for the United States as a religious country. They may point to the number of churches and chapels, and the adequate stipends paid to ministers, as proving that religion may be left to voluntary effort and yet may flourish. The most successful congregations in America raise very large sums of money. And there the pew-system has reached a development unknown in England. The yearly auction of sittings in Mr. Beecher's Church is reported throughout the world. The best seats fetch a remarkable price; and the managers of the Metropolitan Tabernacle or of Surrey Chapel must feel their mouths water when they hear of the revenue thus obtained for religious purposes. But is the homage thus frankly paid to the money-power in a Church agreeable to our English Voluntaries? Does it not suggest to them that "the world" may find other ways of entering into the Church than that of the authority of the law?

The following extract indicates a kind of feeling which it is the obvious tendency of the pew-system to foster,

though I fully believe that it is in the main neutralized by the union of the Christian and the democratic spirit in the American people: "Henry Ward Beecher was asked at one of the meetings in London at which he spoke, 'Do you admit negroes to seats in your Church?' And the question was evidently made a point of. But it was a most unfair one. For a church here is as much a private affair as a club, or as a private house. In countries *where there is any sort of connexion between Church and State such a question would be pertinent;* but we might as well ask you, with a censorious air, if you admitted Hodge the ploughboy to the privileges of the Reform or the Oxford and Cambridge club. . . All our churches are built by people who like to worship together, and though no one is excluded from them, not even negroes, only people of approximately similar social positions are likely to be found in the same congregations. So as our pews are as much our own as our parlours, we don't have the negro in the one any more than we do in the other." (Letter from "A Yankee," in the *Spectator*, Feb. 27, 1864.) An English Churchman, unless he meant to be very bitter, would not speak of Dissenting chapels as clubs for social worship, and English Dissenters would feel such a description to be an odious stigma. Indeed it would not be rash to prophesy that, as many Dissenting congregations are now following in the wake of the Church movement by introducing ritual into their services, some will shortly be found to try the experiment of free and open seats, with an offertory in place of pew-rents.

It is only when they are defending the theory of Free Churches against that of a National Church that

Dissenters appear to be in the habit of claiming for their own societies a spiritual purity and vitality which they declare to be impossible in an Establishment. It is unseemly and useless to bandy vaunts and accusations on such a question. All Churchmen should be ready to admit not only their own deplorable shortcomings, but the virtues and graces which adorn the Dissenting communities. But in defending not ourselves but the constitution of our Church, we may be permitted to ask on what grounds that comparative claim can be sustained?

A standard by which it is practicable and not unfair to test it, is that of originality and independence in theology. In mere scholarship, the Church, through its wealth and its schools and universities, ought to have immensely the advantage over Dissent. Scholarship may be called secular, and the State may help secular interests; but, according to nonconformist arguments, it is a property of State patronage to stifle all freedom and activity of religious thought. But what is the fact? Is not almost all the original theology of our time and country, is not all the theological leadership, to be found in the Church of England? The congregationalist Churches have able writers, good preachers, men skilled and exercised in popularizing theology, but they would probably not desire to put forward any one of their divines as a theologian or religious leader. The admiring historian of the Free Churches of England names a Nonconformist of the present century as "the greatest theologian, after John Owen, who has adorned the history of the free Churches." And who is this great theologian?—"Dr. Pye Smith, author of 'Scriptural

Testimony to the Messiah'" (Skeats, p. 584). Dr. Pye Smith was the contemporary of Newman and Keble and Pusey, of Maurice and Jowett and Stanley. Will any one, thinking over these names, gravely pretend that the Church of England, as compared with the Free Churches, is unfavourable to the earnestness, the independence, the loftiness, of religious thought? The case of John Henry Newman is specially remarkable, because the beginnings of his passionate religious fervour, giving birth to some of the most beautiful hymns of this century, were expressly associated with zeal for the Church Establishment. And at the present moment by far the deepest and most original theology which is given to the world in any newspaper—that which appears almost every week in the *Spectator*, and is well known to proceed from a lay pen—is coupled with a very earnest support of the Church as a national institution.

The Church of England is more aristocratic than a thoroughly effective National Church should be, and its clergy are probably in too independent a position. But they ought at least to exhibit the virtues of independence. It is natural to them, when they are in earnest, to cultivate a high sense of professional honour, and to feel that their business is not to conciliate the public, but to advance the true interests of the nation. It is to be expected of them that they should be deficient in popular vigour, but that they should cherish a fastidious freedom in the formation of opinion. Such a man as John Wesley had the rare advantage of uniting the two qualities, being made by nature to organize and govern, and being also in his character a true son of a National Church. On the platforms of popular meetings, where

the attention is fixed almost exclusively on "rights," and the political principle most in favour is that one man is as good as another; it would be out of place to introduce the consideration of degrees of spiritual quality. But when we find the writers who guide opinion amongst the Nonconformists actually claiming the advantage of quality as well as of effectiveness for the more popular system of the free Churches, we may fairly ask them whether the theologians whom they themselves read with interest and respect are the leading men of their own societies.

And when Englishmen in general reflect upon what concerns the higher life and nobler interests of their country, it can hardly be without satisfaction that they think of such men as Bishop Thirlwall and Bishop Selwyn, as Dr. Pusey and Mr. Liddon, as professor Maurice and Dean Stanley, and remember that these men hold not only an ecclesiastical, but also a national commission. It would be idle to ask whether any one dreams of these men as being morally cramped and degraded by their connexion with the English State. Let the Church of England be a Parliamentary Church; if this character be degrading to the Church (in saying which Nonconformists seem to me to insult the commonwealth of England), it may be allowed conversely to be elevating to the Parliament. The Church of England confesses the Divine vocation of the State. It pays deference, before the God of nations, to the absolute supremacy of righteousness and humanity. It sets the justice of the Sovereign before the vote of any ecclesiastical assembly. It begs of the State, for its own benefit, the corrective and enlarging and civilizing influences of sound secular

principles. It is glad to be guarded from priestcraft, in which it sees an even greater mischief to religion than to the commonwealth. And in return it puts at the service of the State the deep vital force of religious conviction. It seeks to blend loyalty to the Church Catholic and loyalty to the country in the common sentiment of faith in the God of our fathers. The man who makes it a fundamental principle to separate his life as a citizen from his life as a Christian, is in danger of preferring the one life to the other, and especially of keeping his nobler unselfish aspirations for his denomination, and giving his vulgar self-seeking energies to his country. The sons of a National Church are taught that their nation, of which God has made them citizens, is entitled to the same kind of reverent service that the Church in which God has planted them may claim. The country ought to gain by such a witness. At the present time there is a hope stirring in many loyal hearts that our national life may be made wider, stronger, and higher in tone and aspiration. The theory that none but ignoble functions should be reserved to the State does not satisfy them. They think that a great people may aspire to act nobly and wisely as a people, and not only through casual voluntary combinations. The idea of a National Church is strictly in harmony with such hopes and aims, implying as it does that a Christian nation should publicly confess its Christianity. By universal admission, religion is the highest of human interests; and a nation which acts publicly in the sphere of religion is setting the highest possible estimate on its own functions. The Voluntary Principle, on the contrary, invites a nation to pronounce itself a union

for material interests, unworthy to deal with the more sacred offices of humanity.

To put side by side, then, the respective advantages of the two principles, it seems to me reasonable to conclude that the National Principle exalts the idea of citizenship, and is favourable to the higher and finer qualities of spiritual life, whilst the Voluntary Principle stimulates religious activity. To concede this to the Voluntary Principle is to pay it no insignificant tribute, and indeed is to allow nearly all that its advocates are accustomed to claim for it. It will follow that, unless we are content that the members of the Church of England should be religiously inert, it is desirable to find scope and action for the Voluntary Principle within the Church, so far as this can be done without throwing away the benefits of the National Principle. It is evident to anyone who looks back upon the history of the present century, that religious activity has already been largely developed in the National Church, and that this activity—if not properly due to—has at least been aided and stimulated by, the principle of voluntary association. The religious societies which characterise the present age, and especially the great missionary societies, illustrate this progress. The habit now so common in towns, of choosing amongst the churches of the neighbourhood according to sympathy and predilection, has made congregational work of various kinds more lively and enterprizing. These things, it is said, are arguments against the National Principle. Not so: they do indeed trench upon the systematic development of that principle, but in the same way in which municipal government interferes with national government. A half-informed English-

man may become a one-sided partizan of either local government or centralization. But political wisdom sees the advantages of both systems, and seeks to secure as far as possible the good of both. The ecclesiastical question is exactly analogous to the political. The Churchman is not prepared to sacrifice the advantages of a National Church, because men are most active when they enter into voluntary combinations; but he will consider how far it is practical to give freedom to voluntary movements within the elastic bonds of a public Church.

The difficulty is that, in order to excite voluntary action, you must give *power*. If it were proclaimed that a clergyman and his adherents might arrange a Church as they pleased, and have just what services they liked, an immediate impulse would be given to religious zeal, and purse-strings would be rapidly loosened. If a diocesan synod were empowered to elect a Bishop, or to suspend the use of the Athanasian Creed, or to choose a hymn-book for all the churches in the diocese, Churchmen would think it worth while to interest themselves in the constitution and the proceedings of such a synod. But so long as the law governs, law-making will interest the public generally more than synodical action. Whilst the constitution of the Church in England remains what it is, the most canonical and complete Pan-Anglican Synod that could be devised would have little influence *in this country* by the mere promulgation of its opinions. On all sides, clergymen would without scruple avail themselves of the law to set its edicts at defiance. But this is an argument for not being afraid of congregational or synodical activity. According to this view, there is no danger from

Convocation, except of its looking foolish, and reflecting discredit rather than honour upon the Church. And it is expedient to consider, with a bias in favour of local liberty, how far, within the limits of necessary law, the preferences of members of the Church can be allowed to have issue in results for which they care.

Signs of the times are monitors which it is disloyal in Christians not to discern. And in all discussions concerning ecclesiastical policy we are bound to take note of this sign of our times—that the conscience of the age insists that opinion shall to the utmost possible extent be free, and that the enjoyment of it shall as little as possible be restrained by political or social disabilities. At the present moment there is also this other sign to be discerned—that theological opinion is much shaken, and that there is a prevalent desire amongst thinking men not to commit themselves more than they can help either in affirming or in denying. Churchmen who apprehend the significance of these facts are constrained to treat with a deference and a courtesy—which it was more pardonable in other days to refuse—the religious convictions of all their countrymen. They will be ready to consider whether it might not be best to make religious associations purely voluntary, and to call upon the State only to see that there is fair play between them. But they may ask their countrymen of all opinions to consider also whether the old system of our State Church—the system which binds a powerful branch of the Church Catholic to the State, so that they give and receive mutual benefits—a system which has the characters of breadth and historic continuity, which allows a pause, and favours reticence and inquiry more than action, may

not be made to suit the present exigencies of this country and of this time. It will be the natural business of the State, in such an epoch, to make the Church as liberal as the Church will bear to be; it will be the privilege of the Church to sacrifice to the interests of the country which cherishes it everything short of its testimony to the Gospel of Christ. We do not wish to be judged only by what has been; we inherit indeed from the past our ideal of Church and State, but we wish to see it realized in forms which the purpose of God, increasing through the ages, may suggest.

NOTE.

ON THE NATIONALITY OF THE IRISH CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.

I have said incidentally (p. 50), that the considerations which favour the continuance of the Anglican Communion as a State Church in England are opposed to the continuance of the Irish branch of it as a State Church in Ireland. The Dean of Cork, in an article * not unworthy of an accomplished and liberal-minded Irish churchman, endeavours to maintain that the Irish Establishment has the full support of the National Principle. A National Church, he says, according to English and Protestant ideas, is not merely or chiefly the Church of the majority, but "one which asserts the idea of free national life as against the anti-national despotism of the Papacy." He points out that the English nation, although it might *endow* the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland (a policy to which the Dean seems to give his assent), could not possibly make it the National Church of Ireland. Assuming, then, that there must be an Established Church there, he maintains that the State may justly connect with itself the Church of the minority, which recognises so amply the supremacy of the Crown.

* *Contemporary Review*, March 1868.

It is no doubt important to remember that the question of an Established Church is not to be settled in each country by counting heads and taking the Church of the majority for the National Church. The United States, for example, could not make the Baptist denomination the National Church, if that country had the strongest desire for such an institution. But the Dean of Cork assumes too confidently as a principle of universal application, that "a National Church is inseparable from the idea of a Christian nation." A Christian nation may be far more complete, ideally, with a National Church than without it; yet circumstances may in a given case make this ideal completeness impossible. If to anyone the dis-establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland appears to leave that country intolerably "godless," he has only to accustom himself to the contemplation of the religious circumstances of the United States and of our own Colonies. The real question, as regards both principle and expediency, is whether the existence of an Established Church is actually an aid to the development of "free national life," or a hindrance. Can Irish churchmen say with comfort, "It is the privilege of our Church at this time to assert for Ireland the idea of free national life?"

The Dean of Cork warns us that in surrendering the Irish Establishment we should recognise three principles, that of "the independence of nationalities, which leads to the dismemberment of the British Empire; that of religious equality, which leads to the abolition of all establishments; and that of the secularization of Church property, which leads to the confiscation of all religious endowments." Our answer to the warning is that we are not in the least afraid of these principles. Let them by all means be "evoked." They are not likely in Great Britain to have more than fair play. In defending the Empire or the Church against their dissolving power, we should not only have the support of what right reason there may be on our side, we should not only be able to array interest against interest, passion against passion, but we should have the additional aid of all the Conservative prejudice, and most of the British pride, which are generally as strong in professed Liberals as in professed Conservatives.

Nevertheless, the Dean's article will probably strengthen the

misgivings with which moderate men regard the question whether the interests of freedom and tranquillity in Ireland are likely to be promoted by a summary abolition of the Church Establishment. It ought not to be forgotten that, in withdrawing its support from the Protestant Church, the State at the same time surrenders a power—in the appointment of bishops and deans, and the use of other patronage—which it may exercise greatly to the advantage of the country as a whole. We might draw erroneous inferences from the innocent quietness of the Episcopal Church in Scotland. Irish Protestants, smarting under a sense of injury and humiliation, and left to self-government, are in far greater danger of becoming fanatical and quarrelsome than Scotch Episcopalians.

III.

ON CLERICAL LIBERTY OF THOUGHT AND SPEECH.

It is said, and with much semblance of truth, that Christendom is more and more falling asunder into two opponent camps. Granted that the statement is true, there is still some difficulty in finding the right designation under which each camp should be ranged. "Conservative" and "Liberal" in politics, "Catholic" and "Protestant" in religion, present themselves as obvious, but by no means satisfactory appellations. In the first place the real are far from being identical with the nominal divisions; genuine Liberals being found in Conservative ranks, and the Church of Rome herself having always had Protestants of her own to keep in order. Then, again, men may be very similar in their cast of mind, though widely differing in the articles they believe and the principles they avow. If you scratch a strong Protestant, to parody Talleyrand's saying, you will commonly find a good Papist beneath. It is easy to see, for instance, that Dr. McNeile and Cardinal Cullen are but species of the same genus; and that their genus is quite distinct from that which includes Professor Jowett and Dr. Döllinger.

Yet though Catholic and Conservative on the one hand, Protestant and Liberal on the other, are words too vague in their meaning to serve the purpose of a definition, they do loosely indicate certain tendencies which, we instinctively feel, are radically different. And though the names have yet to be coined by which those tendencies can be adequately described, yet there is no difficulty in defining in what the root difference consists. Amidst all the cross divisions and curious intermixture of parties there are two schools of thought directly and irreconcilably at variance, for the one rests on a profound faith, the other on a profound want of faith, in human nature.

The policy of the one school is, of course, emancipation, of the other restraint. To remove, as far as possible, all shackles upon perfect liberty of thought and speech is by the one regarded as the best security for truth, while the other fears that at any rate revealed truth will suffer and perish unless protected from the free handling of lawless intellect.

The clergy of the Church of England for the most part belong to the latter school, though an important and growing minority adheres to the former. In the common parlance of the day this minority are called "Liberals," and if faith in human nature is the "note" of liberalism, the name is rightly given. They are not, however, solicitous of the name. If they are Liberals, they are also something more. Unlike such men as Mr. Herbert Spencer, or Professor Huxley, theirs is not a faith in human nature pure and simple. If they believe in man it is because they believe first in God. The Incarnation bears witness to them of the kinship of Humanity with

the Godhead; it gives them a pledge of the impossibility of man's desertion by God. But because their faith in man rests on a deeper faith in God, they are none the less ready to emancipate human thought. They are frankly willing to adopt the usual arguments in favour of such a course; they would accept, for instance, the four well-known reasons in which Mr. J. S. Mill sums up his plea in favour of liberty of thought and discussion;* that is to say, compressing the four into two, they are anxious for mental freedom:—First, because such freedom is necessary for the discovery and spread of truth. Secondly, because faith, to be living and dynamic, must be militant; because it retains life and force only on condition of constant conflict with error; because a protected belief inevitably sickens and dies.

The advocate of free thought, however, in relation to spiritual truth, is open to an obvious rejoinder on the former of these propositions. "Such truth," he will be told, "has once for all been revealed, and therefore there is none to discover; moreover, the subject-matter is beyond the scope of human reason and scientific investigation." The answer to this objection has so direct a bearing on the question of clerical liberty that I must venture to repeat it.

Discussion, in the sense of mere argument, has a very slight effect in changing and forming beliefs. Mr. Lecky has made his readers familiar with the idea that the great moral and intellectual changes which have passed over Christendom have not resulted from the conflict of opinions and the clash of controversies, but have come to pass in some subtle, secret fashion, of which men were

* On Liberty. People's Edition, p. 30.

quite unconscious till the process was worked out and a new tone of thought and belief established. What Mr. Lecky asserts of communities, Dr. Newman had previously asserted of individuals. "I had a great dislike," he says, "of paper logic. For myself it was not logic that carried me on. As well might one say that it is the quicksilver in the barometer that changes the weather. It is the concrete being that reasons; pass a a number of years, and I find my mind in a new place: how? The whole man moves, the paper logic is but the record of it." (Apologia, p. 285.) I suspect, however, that these transformations of belief are capable of a simple explanation. Where logic is impotent facts are irresistible. The facts in Dr. Newman's case were the discovery that the Fathers were not High Anglicans or adherents by anticipation to the Via Media. Every step towards "rationalism" has been the result, direct or indirect, of some fresh acquisition of positive knowledge. Science not only kills all wrong beliefs that loiter behind on her spreading domains, but also profoundly modifies those which belong to regions that she can never invade. The belief of the orthodox ten-pound householder in verbal inspiration would have been impervious to all mere reasoning; but it has been in a moribund condition ever since Bishop Colenso battered it with arithmetical facts from the Pentateuch. Few or no professed theologians have done so much towards modifying, or rather rectifying, men's conceptions of God as Galileo, Columbus, Newton, and Lyell.

I say "rectifying," for I think there are few paradoxical enough to deny that the influence of the spread of science on religious belief has been an influence for

good. This then is the perfectly valid answer to the objection we had to meet. Though there is no new spiritual truth for us to discover, yet to an indefinite extent our capacity for rightly appreciating revealed truth may be improved, and our tendency to adulterate it with fictions of our own corrected. Our minds are like lenses, of which we can indefinitely rectify the distorting and chromatic defects.

The progress of science then tends to "defecate to a pure transparency" the obscuring and staining mist through which we regard revealed truth. And if the purifier, science must also be the friend of faith. I am aware, of course, that this conviction is at variance with the hopes of many, and the fears of more. On either side the belief is firmly held that science, progress, liberalism, rationalism—the words in common parlance are almost synonyms—must be fatal to faith. Dr. Newman laments over "the all-corroding, all-dissolving scepticism of the intellect in religious inquiries." "I am not speaking," he says, "of right reason, but of reason as it acts in fact and concretely in fallen man. I know that even the unaided reason, when correctly exercised, leads to a belief in God, in the immorality of the soul, and in a future retribution; but I am considering it actually and historically, and in this point of view, I do not think that I am wrong in saying that its tendency is towards a simple unbelief in matters of religion." The *Record*, of course, would accept every word of this. On the other hand, a writer in the *Fortnightly Review*, in January 1867, declares that "an iceberg floating in tropical seas is not more certain of dissolution than is Anglo-Catholicism among the critical solvents of the

nineteenth century." Many persons, of course, would be quite willing to substitute "Christianity" for "Anglo-Catholicism" in this passage. To me it is much easier to tolerate such anticipations in an unbeliever than in a theologian. The atheism of the former is his sufficient justification. His whole scheme rests on the assumption that revealed truth is unnecessary; that human nature is capable of being content with positive science; that we can get on, not only very well, but much better without God; that we have *not* an insatiable craving to believe something concerning regions into which science cannot climb; or at any rate, that, if we have such a craving, it can be satisfied by a subjective religion, by the culture of the "religious sentiment." In a theologian, however, such opinions are far less pardonable. When he asserts that man has a tendency towards a simple unbelief in matters of religion, he virtually declares that faith in God is an unnatural state of mind; that God has to follow up His revelation of Himself by providing means for our continuous coercion into an acceptance of that revelation; and that if God has neglected to provide the proper means, it is man's business to supply the deficiency.

To any one, no doubt, haunted, like Dr. Newman, with a dread of "the bottomless liberalism of thought," an attempt to pave that terrible abyss with a false bottom of dogma is the obvious course. And the precious pavement once laid must plainly be protected from all daring enough to dig holes in it, through which the unwary may fall into the black pit below. But any one who has faith in human nature because he believes that the basis of that nature is not sin, but

righteousness, that it is akin to the divine nature and subject to a divine government from which it can never emancipate itself, will be quite content to let men think freely, convinced that in spite of the aberrations of individuals, communities, and periods, the ultimate tendency is towards truth. The infallibility of the intellect in scientific researches is a fact so familiar to us, that the possibility of questioning it has probably never crossed our minds. In obedience to our own laws of thought we have no option but to arrive at right conclusions. We have no more power to make false discoveries in science than Columbus had to find a non-existent America. Surely the suggested argument from analogy ought to weigh with anyone who believes that there is a spiritual as well as an intellectual man, and that the former is the higher. If the intellectual man is impotent to discern intellectual things wrongly, it is hard to believe that the spiritual man is impotent to discern spiritual things rightly. We have to deal with a revelation which has come to us in an historical form. In obedience to the laws of our own minds we cannot refrain from submitting the history to the crucible of criticism. If it is true, it will stand the test; if it does stand the test, we are powerless—not as individuals, of course, but as a race—to reject it. While, however, the history is thus perforce subjected to our intellectual scrutiny, the revelation confessedly transcends our laws of thought. But the spirit, the moral nature, sets to work, *nolens volens,* on the revelation, in a manner analogous to that in which the intellect sets to work on the history; and if the spirit is as completely satisfied in the one case as the mind is in the other, then human belief in that

revelation is indestructible. All creeds that affront and do violence to our humanity, the distinctive dogmas of all sections of the Narrow Church, the system of which Professor Mansel condescends to be the exponent and apologist—these and such like will perish, it is but a question of time; but the theology of St. John is imperishable.

And it is because they are saturated with this conviction, that an important part of the Clergy wish, without a qualm, that their order should possess the fullest practicable liberty of thought. Whatever bounds may have to be put to our freedom, as the pastorate of a National Church, we are convinced that they are not needed for the preservation of revealed truth. Limitations may be necessary, but on that score, at any rate, they are a necessary evil.

That some restrictions are inevitable, I fully believe; and as we proceed it will become apparent that the grounds on which the necessity for them rests is twofold.

I. The primary function of the Church, and therefore of the Clergy, is to save men from ignorance and sin, not to lead them in the inquiry after truth. There is a division of labour in the intellectual field—to some falls the propagation of such limited and alloyed knowledge as we possess, to others the rectification of actual, and the search after fresh, knowledge. To the pastoral Clergy belongs the former task. They are endowed to teach truth, not to discuss before the people what is truth. They are compelled therefore, by the nature of the case, to assume, at least provisionally, that they are in possession of saving truth, however frankly they may hold the assumption open to challenge.

II. The only way in which the State can secure to the Clergy a wide measure of liberty is by itself imposing certain restrictions.

There seem to be only four ways in which the State can act with respect to religious teaching.

1. The first plan is to hold aloof entirely, except when interference is necessitated by a question of civil right arising between disputant members of some religious community. In the United States this theory is in full operation; Ricasoli would have repeated the experiment in Italy, under the enormous disadvantage of starting with one vast wealthy denomination in all but full possession of the ground; and almost everyone in our own community who cannot, or will not, understand the true functions of a National Church, is clamouring to have the plan introduced into our colonies.

Now if the State holds aloof in this manner, the provision of religion devolves entirely on voluntary zeal — zeal which must perforce operate and fashion itself in some sectarian way, the State alone having the power, as we shall presently observe, to create and sustain a widely-comprehensive Church. And thus the questions meet us, — Will a medley of sects possess the same missionary power against vice and crime as would be exercsied by (may be) fewer and weaker sects *plus* a National Church? or can any sect insure the same free play to the intellect of the clergy on religious matters, as is in fact secured by the State-Church of England?

Probably none but extreme advocates of the Voluntary Principle would answer the former question in

the affirmative; the second will need a moment's discussion.

The existence of a sect in which complete latitude is allowed to the minister is almost inconceivable. I can imagine a case in which a man might have attracted to himself a following of disciples enthusiastic enough to be content to remunerate him for teaching them simply what he thought good to teach, and during his lifetime, he and his circle would, no doubt, constitute a quasi sect. But you could not give permanence to such a thing; you could not provide a succession of such teachers; you must establish some method of appointing the teacher, and those entrusted with the choice would inevitably be biassed by the known opinions of the candidates. The utmost you could do would be to render the man, once chosen, irremovable; and the only result of such an ordinance would be to render the electors very cautious to secure a man they could trust. However, it is waste of time to discuss the possibility of a sect formed on such a basis. I do not know whether even the United States, with their amazing fertility in heresies, have produced even one such attempt. Sects severed from all relationship with the State do in fact only exist on bases more or less narrow. The teacher, if unendowed, is dependent on the good will of his congregation. His liberty is curtailed to the amount of toleration which, by his personal influence, he can win at their hands. If endowed, then he of necessity holds his position under some form of contract. If it is alleged that he has broken the contract, the question must be carried for settlement into a court of law; and the court, influenced as our highest court of appeal undoubtedly has been in the case

of our own Church, by broad principles of policy, would be quite as likely to narrrow, as to widen, the limits of clerical liberty in the appellant sect.

The religious liberty, then, of America, much admired as it has been, is not a liberty in which the clergy participate. The layman has, no doubt, a splendid choice of creeds, and if somewhere between the old orthodoxies on the one hand, and Mormonism or Bible Communism on the other, he cannot find a resting-place, he must be hard to please. And even in that case he has every facility for the formation of a new sect of his own. But no stipendiary religious teacher in America possesses an amount of liberty comparable to that enjoyed by every clergyman of the Church of England. As regards, then, the spread and purity of religious truth, the great end towards which clerical liberty is the means, America does not possess the same advantages as the Mother Country, for want of a National Church in the midst of her sects. She may yet, however, gain that advantage. It is reasonable to hope that, in the Darwinian struggle for existence among her numberless sects, one will in the end rise to predominance. That one will owe its strength to its truth, and its truth to its clerical liberty. Gradually it will gather to itself the best religious minds of the day; gradually it will command the respect and the interest of statesmen; gradually a relationship will grow up between it and the State. The State will protect it from schism, will assist the wiser members in their efforts to widen their borders, and so, under the expansive power of freedom, that sect may grow up to some measure of Catholicity, and become in the future the Church of America.

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2. The second policy which the State may adopt in religious matters is that of general endowment—the establishment of "religious equality" among the chief religious bodies. This has been the favourite scheme of many eminent statesmen and writers, securing, as it obviously does, the independence of the clergy, and yet guarding against the supposed evil of the interference of the civil magistrate.* This seems to be the most just—would that it were also the most probable—solution of the religious difficulty in Ireland. It is partially, of course, already introduced—the Roman Catholics receiving some *modicum* from the imperial purse for the support of the College at Maynooth, and various Protestant denominations grants from the *Regium Donum*. The difficulty is to determine what sects to endow, coupled, in Ireland, with the further difficulty of inducing them to accept the endowment. The line must be drawn somewhere. Other considerations might, I am well aware, lead to a different conclusion; but, in the interests of clerical liberty, the true policy would be to endow as few as possible, and preferably those in which the State had most control. For the multiplication of sects, as already indicated, is adverse to religious freedom, the tendency of each sect being, when unchecked by the wider ideas of the State, to contract. Where there were a few endowed communions, more or less under the Catholic influence of State policy, there would always be a fair hope that they would expand, approximate to each other, and finally coalesce into a Church. The Ultramontanes of Ireland are wise in their generation, in repudiating beforehand

* I would refer any reader who cares for a fuller discussion of the question to the late Sir G. C. Lewis's "Essay on the Irish Church," pp. 394–407.

the possible offer of State endowments. They know that if the State endows, the State will also in some measure influence and control, that the amount of influence and control will constantly tend to increase, and that the inevitable result will be a gradual impregnation of the Romish Church in Ireland with liberal thought, and the consequent slow but sure subversion of the "temporal power" of the Pope in that unhappy country.

3. On the plan, then, of a general endowment of the chief religious bodies, I should be inclined to expect a fuller measure of clerical liberty than if the State held entirely aloof from religion. Still the latitude possible on this plan would be much less than that enjoyed in an Established Church. We have now to consider whether it is politic, or even possible, to render that liberty boundless, or whether some restrictions are not inevitable.

"But what," it may be asked, "is the difference between an *endowed* and an *established* Church? Many writers, Dr. Chalmers for example, use the terms as identical." "By the *establishment* of a religion," is the answer given by the late Sir G. C. Lewis, "we understand not merely that it is endowed, but that it has received from the State certain political privileges (*e.g.* that its prelates have a seat in one of the Houses of Parliament, that its members have an exclusive right of admission to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, &c.); that it has a legal precedence of other persuasions, and that its clergy are raised above the clergy of any other denomination, not only by their endowments, but also by their civil position." But this definition, though

only thirty years old, is already out of date. The peculiar privileges of the Church are disappearing one by one, and we can contemplate their total disappearance, even the loss of the Bishops to the House of Lords, without trepidation. Yet, when they are all gone, the Church will still be *established;* for that dependence on the State, that necessity for ceding the ultimate control over her discipline, her ceremonial, and the articles of her faith, which Sir G. C. Lewis, like so many others, regarded as the price which she paid for her favoured position, is the one thing *essential* to *establishment;* the one real boon the State has to bestow; the concomitant privileges having been from the first as *accidental* as they were pernicious.

But to return to the question. The third scheme we have to discuss is this:—is it politic, or possible, in an Established Church, to remove all restrictions from the clergy, and leave them free to teach whatever they conscientiously believe? In the *Fortnightly Review,* some months ago, Lord Amberley answered the question in the affirmative, and emerging from the foggy liberalism in which so many minds are shrouded on Church matters, clearly and incisively stated what he wished. Our sincere thanks are due to him for this: for any one who has enjoyed a hearty laugh over his articles, the cleverness of which cannot veil their absurdity, will hardly need any further demonstration of the impracticability of his scheme.* The assumption on which his whole argument

* I must indulge in a foot note, to protest against Lord Amberley's invocation of Coleridge in aid of his views. Whether elsewhere in his works Coleridge discusses the question of clerical liberty, I do not myself know; but a friend, who has a far fuller acquaintance with his writings than I have, assures me that he never does. In his "Church and State," however, the

is built is, to begin with, fallacious. "The State," he writes, "has no business to protect any one set of theological opinions rather than another. It ought to hold the scales with equal impartiality between all. Let this

only work Lord Amberley quotes—I am troubled with a doubt whether he has read the book, though he has plainly read Mr. Mill's well-known Essay upon Coleridge—the question is certainly not raised; he is engaged throughout on a different subject. It was common, he says, for all primitive races, on taking possession of a new country, in the division of the land into heritable estates among the heads of families, to make a reserve, which he calls the "Nationality," for the maintenance of a permanent order, the "Clerisy," who were to be charged with the civilization of the country. This Clerisy he calls the "National Church." Now this, I need scarcely say, is a very ideal bit of history. The Anglo-Saxons, for instance, when they took possession of England, after assigning for tillage their "alods" to the eorls and ceorls, did indeed reserve the "folcland," but it was simply for the purpose of common pasturage, or else to serve as the "mark," or boundary, between adjacent tribes. Having, however, given this meaning to the words, Coleridge proceeds to make the very obvious remark that neither Christianity, nor *à fortiori* any particular scheme of theology supposed to be deduced from it, forms an essential part of the being of a "National Church;" and he illustrates the remark by observing that the National Church was Levitical among the Hebrews, and Druidical among the Kelts. It is on the strength of this remark, and apparently this alone, that Lord Amberley claims Coleridge as an advocate for complete clerical liberty—even though that liberty be pushed to the extent of rejecting Christianity. But though Coleridge's National Church—"the order charged with the progressive civilization of the community,"—is quite distinct from the Church of Christ; yet, while insisting on the difference, he emphatically says, "two distinct functions do not necessarily imply or require two distinct functionaries: nay, the perfection of each may require the union of both in the same person. And in the instance now in question, great and grievous errors have arisen from confounding the functions; *and fearfully great and grievous will be the evils from the success of an attempt to separate them.*" Now when I compare this passage with another in which he states the objects to which the Nationality was applicable as being (1) the maintenance of Universities and great liberal schools: (2) the maintenance of a pastor and schoolmaster in every parish: (3) the building and repair of churches, schools, &c., I cannot doubt that he intended the theological professors in the Universities and the pastors in the parishes to be at least Christian. He says, indeed, elsewhere, that there are only two absolute disqualifications for holding a benefice or "trusteeship" in the National Church, —namely allegiance to another Head than the king, and compulsory celibacy in connexion with this extra-national Head. But this does not in the least

be granted, and it will follow that an Established Church, in order to justify the fact of its existence, ought to be, not sectarian, but national. It ought to represent the religious feelings of the whole community; no one should feel himself utterly excluded from it; no theological faction should be permitted to use it for the exclusive promotion of its own opinions." But this duty of the State to be impartial among the sects, is a mere assumption, a fanciful idea. On the utilitarian theory of politics—the only practical theory, at all events—the duty of the State, if the State has a duty in the matter, can only be determined on the Benthamite principle: What is best for the community as a whole? Grant that religion, if in the main true, is a civilizing power, and that it increases in beneficence as it sheds off error, then the duty of the State is simply to take the best means to insure at once the spread and the progressive purification of religion. My whole argument is bent to show that the best means to this double end is an Established Church

contradict what he had before implied, that the theological and pastoral clerks must, of course, be Christian. The whole book was written to show that the Catholic Emancipation Act ought not to lead to an assignment of a share in the Irish Church Edowments to the Romanist clergy for the political reason that they were an *imperium in imperio:* but if Coleridge had not been focussing all his "ideas" and arguments on to this one point, I suspect he would have discovered other disqualifications. As it is, however, the first he lays down goes far to exclude all sects and "free churches" which claim autonomy, and which, though not anti-national, like the Papal Church, are clearly un-national. It is quite plain that Coleridge required his "national clerisy" to acknowledge the supremacy of the Head of the State. On the readiness of the Anglican clergy to acknowledge that supremacy rests their claim to be established; by refusing to acknowledge it the sectarian clergy forego their claim. Lord Amberley would find, on inquiry, that almost none of the nonconformist bodies would enter the Establishment, if the condition were a submission to State control as complete as that now rendered by the Church.

with the *least possible*—these two words are the pith of the proposition—restriction on the clergy.

And in this view of the relationship of the State to the Church lies the answer to the often-urged objection, that it is irrational and presumptuous in the State to constitute itself a judge of the truth of creeds. No doubt, in the old belief, the State was the judge of creeds, but in our own case the doctrine has long since received an essential modification. We contend for the continuance of the establishment of the Church of England, not because we assume her doctrine to be truer, but because her Constitution is more favourable than that of any other communion to the growth of truth and the escape from error—more favourable because she gives greater freedom of thought and speech to the clergy, and because the law court and the legislature can be relied on to rid her of any doctrine which the slow judgment of the nation has pronounced dubious or untenable.

But though great freedom is needed, it is more than doubtful whether absolute freedom, even if practicable, would be for the interests of truth. In politics a keen interest is kept alive by the clash and rivalry of contest, and in science by the intense curiosity engendered by the limitless possibility of fresh discoveries. But in religion, if men were secure of their pay and ran no risks, if they had nothing worse to fear than the scoldings of the religious press, and nothing worthier to battle against than the rusty logic of antagonists whom they despised, I suspect their earnestness would flag, and they would soon weary of the task of retailing their religious philosophy in the ears of a stiff-brained and

unsympathetic laity. If an ideal cleric of the Amberleian church were to find himself in a university professorship, or in an incumbency with a highly-educated congregation, he might prosper and be useful; but elsewhere, say in a rural parish, he would in all probability subside into the cultivation of *dilettanti* metaphysics, while his congregation, which needed strong and hankered after coarse teaching, would repair to some Little Bethel to get there "the savoury meat that their soul loveth."

But desirable or not, the idea is utterly impracticable. Lord Amberley sees certain difficulties in the way of its realization, but he underrates, or entirely overlooks others. When he has abolished all subscriptions, and rendered every cleric capable of holding a benefice and incapable of deprivation, whatever his teaching may be, he is at once encountered by the difficulty which the use of a liturgy presents. And to meet this he has nothing better to suggest than an official proclamation that a clergyman, though bound to read, is not bound to believe the liturgy, or else a reference to the congregation to decide by vote whether the liturgy shall be used or not. But granting that this obstacle may be surmounted, there are others to follow, two of which at least seem to me insuperable.

The idea of a sect is exclusion, of a Church comprehension: but neither can prematurely approach the realization of the idea without suicidal results. The sect, excluding to insure identity of belief, may in the end dwindle down to two or three individuals, like the famous community lauded by David Deans, which consisted of "Johnny Dodds of Farthing's Acre, and ae

man mair that shall be nameless." The Church, tolerating variety of creed for the sake of comprehension, may eventually contain such incongruous elements that their enforced union can produce no result but reciprocal paralysis. The Church reformers, whose views Lord Amberley expounds, must find room among their endowed clerisy for men as widely apart as Manning and Emerson, as Hugh McNeile and Theodore Parker, as John Henry and Francis Newman. Would not the force of these men, bound together by membership of the same body, be mainly spent in neutralizing each other? As matters stand, whatever of good there is in the teaching of each operates among their respective followers: if, however, instead of a separate sphere, they had a common sphere, all, or nearly all, their power would be wasted in antagonism. It is already rather hard on a congregation—more especially in the country where there is no other church within reach—to be liable to a Ritualist, a Rationalist, or a Puritan parson, in may be quick succession, but the most bucolic loyalty to "Church and State" would be strained to cracking if you added a Positivist and a Papist to the possibilities. And even if the congregations were not alienated, the main work of each successive teacher would consist in undoing what his predecessor had done. There is, too, another point to be considered. When there is hopeless incompatibility of temper between man and wife, the only chance for the preservation of mutual goodwill lies in their agreement to part. In like manner, to compel communion between religious bodies which detest each other's distinctive doctrines, only fosters and intensifies their bitterness. I am not sure whether, even

as matters stand, there is not more bitterness, and consequently a greater loss of missionary power among parties in the Church, than among sects outside the Church. A certain measure of harmony, a certain approximation to unity, is absolutely necessary, if the Church is to be militant to any purpose against vice and crime.

I believe, therefore, that the chief *raison d'être* of a Church would be sacrificed by granting limitless latitude to the clergy. I am convinced also that the State is simply powerless to establish such a Church. "In the matter of religion," says Lord Amberley, "the general public are in the position of a jury. To enable them to arrive at any rational and well-grounded belief, they ought to hear the ablest pleadings both for and against the orthodox doctrines of their age." That is, the people not only may, but must, hear both sides and all sides. Opposite views are to be advocated from the same pulpit before the same congregation. Consequently, the task of choosing their creed out of all rival doxies is to be thrown on the people. Yet, as a fact, 99 persons out of 100, if not 999 out of 1,000, are incompetent to choose their own creed. The vast majority never attempt the task. Their faith is simply a faith in the faith of others. The work of changing and purifying creeds is in the hands of a very few, and the many unconsciously accept the conclusions of their leaders. But this scheme not only ignores a great human fact, it is also an appalling violation of the liberty of the subject. I claim it as one of the indefeasible rights of man not to be forced to hear more than one side unless he chooses. Nor will any people, I am sure, that is

religious in any sense of the word, submit to any serious infringement of that liberty. If the State were strong enough for a time to prevent the Church from splitting into fragments, yet when secession after secession had taken place, till the sects formed a vast majority, both in number and force, of the nation, the cry for the partition or secularization of the national endowments would become irresistible.

I believe, then, that Lord Amberley's ideal church could only exist in an ideal nation to match. The practical problem is, how to make our National Church as comprehensive as possible under actual circumstances. At the present time, if you make the creed too definite, you exclude; if you make it too indefinite, you alienate.

4. There remains but one other attitude which the State can assume towards religious teaching, without arrogating the right to judge of creeds. It may found a Church which shall have, as the law of her existence, a continuous effort to be national. The obvious policy would be to frame, in the first instance, articles of belief as comprehensive as possible, to impose the acceptance of them as the condition of holding benefices, but to retain the power of modifying them from time to time, whenever modification became necessary for the preservation or the increase of the Church. On this plan, and on no other, can you secure the *maximum* of clerical liberty. For that liberty depends less on what the clergyman is free to teach, than on the wideness of the sphere within which a hearing is accorded him. The cleric is nothing without a laity to listen. If you enlarge his freedom of speech at the cost of alienating the people,

you only emancipate him as an individual, to narrow his scope as a teacher. The problem then resolves itself into this,—Upon what basis is the chosen church of the State to maintain her position as the national, the quasi Catholic Church?

The usual answer, and it has recently been reiterated by the Bishop of London, is this—"Our basis is a common belief in essentials, with ample tolerance for diversity of opinions in non-essentials."[1]

Now this answer may be taken in either of two different senses. If the meaning is, that a certain measure of common belief is essential to the cohesion of any religious community, and that to leave all questions open could only end in disruption, then the proposition is identical with what I have been contending for, and I have only two remarks to make,—first, that the sooner an end is made of enforced subscription to non-essential doctrines, which are not wanted for our knitting together in one body, the better for the Church; and secondly, that a common belief in error—in Arian, Mahometan, Mormonite error, for example—has been found, for a time at any rate, an adequate bond of union. If, however, the meaning be, and this no doubt is what the Bishop intends, that the Church is to take her stand on certain "essential" doctrines, and prohibit on those doctrines diversity of opinion among her clergy, then it seems to me that the position is fallacious and untenable. Who is to decide what are essentials and what are not? And when we have fixed on our essentials, what is to prevent the existence of the very widest diversity under cover of the same word formulæ? The Bishop selects

[1] See the Bishop's Charge, 1866, pp. 5-10.

the Godhead of Christ as one of the essentials—nor would, I fancy, the vast majority of Churchmen consent to its exclusion. Yet a strange variance of belief on this head might shelter under the language of the Church. I do not think that the author of "Ecce Homo" is rendered ineligible for a benefice by anything he has written, nor was the late Mr. Robertson. By Evangelicals, however, their opinions are branded as "shocking." Dr. Colenso and his friends contend that his views on the nature of our Redeemer are not merely compatible, but in harmony, with the Prayer Book: nevertheless, I have heard nominal Unitarians accept them as identical with their own. There are, however, deeper objections to this basis. The doctrines pronounced essential will lose their hold upon men's minds if they are forbidden to think of them freely. Again, when the Church says such and such doctrines are not now, and never shall be, open questions, as regards the said doctrines she arrogates to herself infallibility. Moreover, in prohibiting—not for the time only (for that may be quite justifiable), but for ever—their subjection to criticism, she implies a doubt of their truth; for, as Lord Amberley acutely remarks, men never seek to protect doctrines about which they have no doubt. And lastly, this basis of essentials may easily become incompatible with the comprehensiveness of a National Church. The majority of our own nation might become Unitarian, and in that case it should be lawful for a beneficed cleric to question the Godhead of Christ; or rather, perhaps, Unitarian should be substituted for Trinitarian dogmas in the prescribed formularies, for I much doubt whether diversity of belief on such a subject would not be fatal to the

cohesion of the Church. Nor is this an admission which ought to startle the most orthodox of men, unless he believes that the theology of St. John really needs propping up by State endowments.

I submit, then, that this scheme of essentials and non-essentials is not, and never should be, the theory of the Church of England. That Church has never arrogated to herself infallibility—even on such a vital point as the Godhead of Christ. From the Reformation onwards our Church has been worked on another principle. At times that principle has been in abeyance, at times it has been violated; till within the last few years it has been obeyed, when obeyed, instinctively; at last, it seems to me, the State is becoming conscious of a policy to be pursued in relation to the Church, and the period has now arrived when that policy must be avowed and recognised.

That policy is summed up, as I have all along indicated, in the one word, Comprehension. The State must make the Church as national as possible. The question whether dogmas are to be retained or abandoned, restrictions preserved or removed, the definite toned down into the indefinite, must be settled by the consideration—Which decision will command the widest assent?

In actual fact the policy of the State will always be anti-dogmatic. That the whole tendency of modern civilization is from dogmatism towards rationalism,—that is, from artificial belief to natural belief,—is an indisputable fact. Slowly and cautiously therefore the State is constituting one doctrine after another an open question. While ecclesiastical sectarianism is chafing for permission to make new heresies, the State is quietly unmaking old orthodoxies.

And thus the State is doing gradually what Lord Amberley would do swiftly, and thereby escaping the danger of bewildering, irritating, and alienating the people, by flinging down before them a multiplicity of creeds to choose from; for the number of open questions in the Church is not on the increase, in spite of this State process. The silent progress of religious rationalism is year by year consigning, and that for ever, one vexed question after another to the limbo of extinct controversies. Intellectual restrictions are growing up on the one hand quite as fast as legal restrictions are being removed on the other. And thus, if we close certain questions as fast as we open others, we keep down to a not intolerable degree the perplexity with which the conscience of the laity, however much the laity may detest the business, must inevitably to a certain extent be distracted. Wrangles that harassed our forefathers are defunct for us,—a circumstance which has rendered at least a dozen of the Thirty-nine Articles simply obsolete.

I have said that the policy I have indicated has in fact been the policy of the State towards the Church in England ever since the Reformation; the latent and instinctive—not till now (and scarcely even now) the conscious and avowed policy. Still the principle of comprehension, upon which the Church of England was undoubtedly built, was from the first incompatible with any pretence to finality; it always involved the necessity for hereafter abandoning any authorized dogma, when within the Church honest belief had grown up and waxed strong at variance with that dogma. At the Reformation, when the spirit of dogma, the craving for

definiteness, was in the ascendant, any attempt to have rendered our formularies less rigid and distinct would probably have conciliated and comprehended fewer than were actually brought within the pale. But to the Church of England—thanks to her union with the State—belongs the unique glory of having never added to her dogmas, but rather taken away from them. At times, when the ecclesiastical or sectarian element has been predominant, the principle of comprehension has been violated, but we have reason to be thankful for the very small power for permanent mischief which our Narrow-Church divines have on the whole possessed.

It is, however, to be much regretted, that we have accomplished the widening of our borders in such an awkward and objectionable manner. To have got rid of untenable formularies would have been, of course, far better than to retain the words while emptying them of meaning. No doubt the ostensible theory now is, that the duty of the State, when appealed to, is limited to deciding whether the contract on which the benefice is held has been violated; that is, whether the defendant's teaching has been incompatible with the fair and reasonable construction of some Article or other. When Mr. Gorham wished to appeal from the Prayer Book to the Bible, and the Court refused to hear his argument, they were justified no doubt by this theory, and also by a consideration of the shortness of life; but I maintain that the final decision was none the less given, not in mere conformity with dry inelastic law, but in pursuance of a great policy. In the trial concerning "Essays and Reviews" it was perfectly apparent that the lower Court judged according to law, the Court of Appeal according

to policy. A translation is almost of necessity an interpretation. In using the word "everlasting" in the Athanasian Creed, the Church of England had ruled that the right significance of *αἰώνιος* was "endless." Mr. Wilson was allowed, and in this he was permitted more liberty than was conceded to Mr. Gorham, to appeal from the translation to the original,—that is, virtually, from the Prayer Book to the Bible, and to argue that the Greek did not of necessity bear the meaning given in the English word. But the whole line of argument adopted and recognised as valid by the Courts in this and other trials was even more significant. Instead of contesting the exact meaning of the formularies, the defendants bent all their energies to show that the opinions they held had long been, and still were, held by an important section of the Church. And I submit that the acceptance of that argument as valid took the question out of the domain of law into the higher region of policy, and distinctly raised the issue:—Can a Church which claims to be National exclude from her pale, opinions which have established so good a right to be included?

Still our clumsy English method of retaining words, which are but the husks of their former selves, is much to be deplored. The laity, who see the sound-looking nut, cannot believe that the kernel has really been eaten out. The evil is not perhaps so great as has been represented, for our controversies and lawsuits have succeeded in rendering some words, such as "eternal," "regeneration," "inspiration," "atonement," &c., as ambiguous as they were formerly plain in their meaning. But there are some words and phrases too hard to admit of their sharp edges being thus rounded off. And when the laity

hear the clergy use these words and phrases in a sense which, however legitimate, is non-natural, a suspicion of their honesty *will* creep into their minds. It is much to be wished that the Court of Final Appeal, after a judgment which legitimates a non-natural or even non-obvious meaning of certain language, had the power to order, or rather to procure an order from a still higher authority, for the change or excision of the word or words in question. For instance, if after Mr. Wilson's trial the word "everlasting" in the Athanasian Creed had been by authority altered to "eternal," the gain to the Church would have been very great.

In another objection frequently brought against State action in ecclesiastical matters—I mean on the score of the slowness, cost, and risk of all proceedings in the Spiritual Courts—I cannot concur. I am glad that an impediment should thus be presented alike to the hasty suppression of nascent heterodoxies, and the premature recognition of new opinions as entitled to toleration within the Church. We must be content to move slowly, for we want a double toleration—by the people as well as by the law. The Church would gain a loss, if she gained the latter without the former. To me it seems that there is something unmanly in the cry sometimes raised on behalf of the liberal clergy. If their opinions expose them to some social persecution, if their chances of promotion are very small, if bishops charge them and religious newspapers slander them, if a few incur deprivation, or else for conscience' sake resign their livings; if, worse still, they have to endure isolation and suspicion in their own homes—this, and a great deal more than this, is good both for them, and for the truth (if truth be)

they witness for. The tough fight they have to make against old prejudices, crystallized creeds, and party organizations, is simply inevitable. Truth must be militant before it is triumphant. And religious truth, I say, is not triumphant till, in addition to the toleration of the law-court, it has won the assent of the people. Our present danger is the tendency to haste and impatience in certain quarters. If we are not careful, we shall break away from the laity, and leave them behind. The toleration of the religious public is already strained almost as far as it will bear. There is an amount of real uneasiness, bewilderment, and irritation toward which, in the simplest Christian charity, we are bound to act with tenderness. For the present the work of dissolving dogmas has gone far enough. We want a period of calm, in which the people may grow familiar with, and learn to value, the new lights: they cannot all at once dispense with the definite systems which have so long served them as spiritual go-carts. To precipitate the settlement at law of another religious controversy would be an ill service to the Church of England. There is a great—too great—probability that the next question will concern the Godhead of Christ. I earnestly hope that years may elapse before that question is brought to a judicial issue. If we are only patient, a legal adjudication upon it may never be needed. Should it, however, be forced to a solution any time within the next decade, I cannot imagine how the verdict—whatever it may be—can be otherwise than most disastrous. The general public, which at present unconsciously believes in two, if not three Gods, is as yet utterly unfit to face the question.

I may be asked—if one of the "orthodox" chance to

read this essay, he will be sure to ask—where is the process of dogma-dissolving to cease? The answer has been implied throughout the preceding pages, but before I conclude it may be well to repeat it explicitly. A certain measure of common belief is essential to the coherence of a Church, and must therefore be required of the clergy. You may change one essential (in this sense) belief for another, but you cannot diminish the minimum. Here then we have a security for *some* belief; and in human nature itself, linked as it is with the Divine nature, we have a warranty that the common shall be ultimately the true belief. Man, ever progressive, ever under the guidance of God, cannot persist in the acceptance of error or the rejection of truth. A generation hence, for example, educated Christians will be as incapable of believing in endless perdition as they now are of believing in the diurnal revolution of the sun round the earth. Truth is indispensable to progress, and therefore men must and will have it. The truth of truths then, "God manifest in the flesh," is safe, whatever betides. We *cannot* abandon that faith in the Incarnation which is destined to be the great dynamic idea of our future civilization.

IV.

THE CHURCH AND THE UNIVERSITIES.

In the course of an eloquent plea for the "Abolition of Tests in the University of Oxford," Mr. Goldwin Smith clenches his appeal for intellectual liberty in the University by urging the hopelessness of seeking the same freedom for the Church.* Whether it is quite wise thus to separate two kindred causes, or quite generous to those amongst the clergy who have been not the least zealous of the advocates for University Reform, thus contentedly to throw their still nearer interests overboard, I will not now ask; but at any rate it is a curious comment on his argument that a considerable measure of clerical emancipation has since been obtained, whilst similar proposals for the Universities have, on more than one occasion, miscarried: so that at the present hour we are in some respects held by less stringent subscriptions as clergymen than as Masters of Arts,†—a circumstance which may encourage us to hope that it will be found

* "Plea for the Abolition," &c. p. 94.

† An M.A. at Oxford still subscribes to the Articles without explanation, or qualification. For the clergy the formula of subscription itself explains the act as an "assent to the Thirty-nine Articles," and a "belief that the doctrine of the United Church, as therein set forth, is agreeable to the Word of God,"—an "assent" and "belief" which, *ex animo imponentis*, must be taken as general, inasmuch as the singular, "doctrine," was deliberately substituted for the plural, "doctrines," by the legislature.

in the end no less sound policy, as certainly it seems in principle more consistent, to advocate greater freedom both for Church and University, not as alternative measures, but as parts of the same programme.

And indeed it is difficult to see why national education and national worship cannot be dealt with on the same principle. "The Established Church," we are told, "has drifted from her moorings, in history, to an alien shore. The general system of which she was a part has broken up, and she remains the creature of the Tudor Kings and Parliaments, surviving the authors of her being, and with her only power of legislation and self-adaptation buried in their grave." But if the accidents of the historical rise of an institution are to be taken for ever to fetter its development, it would seem a hopeless task, not merely to attempt the reform of Church or University, but of the British Constitution itself. The whole of society (we learn from the same authority) is in process of transition from the basis of feudalism to that of democracy, from authority to rational conviction. Why then should the ecclesiastical organization of the nation alone be incapable of gradual change? Why is it alone to be fixed between immobility and revolution? Because its power of self-adaptation is buried in a Tudor grave? But if the question is of self-adaptation, the history of the last Oxford Commission would not leave much hope of University Reform either. It was the national legislature which extended the Universities more nearly to the measure of the nation, and it is to the same source that we look for Church Reform. "But," says Mr. Goldwin Smith, "our present legislature could not, without flagrant incongruity, make laws for

the Anglican Church. The Parliament, which established the Articles and the Book of Common Prayer, no longer exists. That legislature was an exclusively Anglican legislature. It has passed away, and in its place there now sits a mixed assembly of Anglicans, Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, and Jews." It seems strange logic, however, when the question is of the expediency of changes, of which one main result would be to draw within the pale of the Church many who now, for various reasons, dissent from its doctrine or discipline, to argue that Parliament is incompetent to make such changes simply because it contains Dissenters. Nor is there any reason for assuming that Nonconformists must of necessity use their influence in the national legislature in a way hostile to the Established Church, except the irrational traditions of animosity, which are a retributive legacy from the times when the Established Church assumed, as self-evident, its right to oppress and injure Nonconformists. It is not thought now, by liberal politicians at least, an extreme thing to ask that the Parliament of the United Kingdoms, in which Presbyterians and Catholics are in a vast minority, should yet legislate for Scotland or Ireland without any hostile intentions towards Presbyterianism or Catholicism. Why should it be supposed, then, that English Dissenters alone are incapable of rising above the level of sect, and acting intelligently and equitably towards beliefs in which they may not share? It would, of course, be altogether out of place to hear abstruse theological questions debated from opposite sides of the House of Commons, if for no other reason, because the majority of members could not possibly possess the requisite special knowledge;

precisely as it would be out of place to hear similar discussions on science and philosophy. But Parliament has not to decide what is true in religion, or in philosophy, in order to establish a Church or a University, but only to fix certain external conditions under which truth may be sought for, or received convictions acted on. Without raising a single scientific or learned issue, Parliament may decide that science or learning is an end worthy of national consideration; and, acting on that assumption, may endow a University. And on precisely the same principle it may decide that public worship and the religious instruction of people should be provided for, and to that end establish a National Church. Indeed it is obvious that in some respects the latter lies more within its province than the former. Theology, on its practical side as religion, addresses itself immediately to the universal conscience; science only indirectly approves itself to the popular judgment through its applications and material results. When, for instance, there is a question as to a dogma which does not belong to the arcana of theology, but has its place in our Confessions and Creeds, nothing can be more fitting than that the national legislature should determine, not whether the dogma is true, but whether it is a truth of which the conscience of men generally is convinced. It is not long since a London vestry set an admirable precedent in petitioning for the removal from our services of the Athanasian Creed. As might be expected, the clerical journals were merry, after their kind, with vulgar sneers about shoemakers minding their lasts, or shopkeepers attending to their trades, as if it were not within the province of any sane man, when required to

make a solemn profession of faith, to object that he either does not understand, or is not convinced of the truth of, the words proposed to him.

We may be met here with the objection that, in respect of religion, neither Parliament nor the nation has any duty but submission to an authority higher than its own; that the Church is not within the nation, but above the nation—not the organ of its reason and conscience, but their divinely-instituted guide,—an objection which is only the echo of language, that once had a meaning, into times when its meaning is lost. When the Church had a corporate existence apart from the nation, as well as a distinct organ of utterance, it could use authoritative language with effect for good or ill. But in the mouth of a section of our own clergy such a style is little more than an affectation. There is not, indeed, the least fear that a nation which has once broken free should again submit to the old ecclesiastical yoke; the only danger is, that important opportunities for action may be lost through that intellectual timidity—the besetting infirmity of the English mind—which seems never willing completely to reject a false assumption. There is a kind of pseudo-liberality which consists, not in acting wholly on your own principles, whilst leaving as far as possible to your opponents liberty to act wholly on theirs, but in trying yourself to act a little on both. Thus the claims of the Catholic and catholicizing party amongst ourselves, which mean either the stultification of our national history for the last three centuries or nothing, are neither absolutely rejected nor (still less) admitted. Just because they are so vast they are allowed a *certain* weight, sufficient to clog the wheels

of any really rational Church Reform. Such claims might indeed be safely disregarded, did they not, in immediate policy, coincide with the views of various political parties, which on different grounds object to any direct State concern whatever with religion.

It would be beside the purpose of the present paper to enter upon the defence at length of the principle of a State Church, beyond observing that it seems in the main identical with that of a State University. In each case the question is wholly one of expediency, not of ends but of means. Given as ends—Religion or Learning—can their interests be promoted with most efficiency and least collateral inconvenience by national or by private organization? The advocates of Voluntaryism seem to push their principle to an exaggeration when they try to make it a matter, not of expediency, but of right. Surely it can need no argument to prove that the various lesser societies within the nation, calling themselves its sects or churches, have no better right or qualification to arrange systems of religious doctrine or worship than that greater society which contains them—the nation itself. Nonconformists and their political supporters have done signal service by the protest they have maintained against despotism and in favour of individual freedom, but they apparently fail to see that liberty of conscience once asserted and secured, the National Church can take its stand on that principle as well as the other religious bodies. There is no ban on the nation, as a nation, which prevents it making provision collectively for common worship and religious teaching, while various fragments and sections of the nation are doing so independently and separately. And it is

worth observing that the progress of democratic principles has to some extent turned the old position of the Voluntaryists. It used to be contended that Voluntaryism called forth a greater amount of individual zeal and energy than State action. Doubtless it is so when individual initiative is opposed to paternal or despotic government; but in a democratic society government is itself an expression of the national will; and a State Church may thus become, under the *régime* of democracy, the highest expression of the intelligence and activity of the nation. Nor are there wanting signs at the present time that in various directions the Voluntary Principle has overreached itself, and that a reaction is setting in. As respects almost all the higher national interests, not religion only, but popular education for instance, or sanitary regulations, or the relief of the poor, we seem on the eve of reforms in the direction of more efficient national action. The loss of power from perpetual crossing of purpose and organization is seen to be so deplorable, that probably for some time to come we shall say, not so much, "Let each do what he thinks best," but, "Let us discover what *is best*, and unite our energies in doing it." Under such a view it would seem sounder policy to reform thoroughly Church and University than to abolish both, or either, as national institutions, and transfer their work to spontaneously organized societies. As regards religion there is indeed a special difficulty, from the great diversity of belief, which separates, on this subject, even (or perhaps specially) the highest and best-instructed minds. Yet here also there are indications, not perhaps of a tendency towards greater unity of doctrine, but of a

growing sense of the greater relative importance of the doctrines on which men are most agreed over those on which they most differ. Such a tendency may be used to strengthen the position of the National Church, if only a wise policy of concession be cordially accepted, and if the principle be kept steadily in view of the minimum of speculative agreement which can be made the basis of the maximum of common religious life and worship.

So much seems necessary by way of clearing the ground; for until we have, on the one hand, substituted for the Catholic or mediæval idea of the Church as an authority above the State, the modern or liberal idea of the Church as an organization of the State for the ends of religion, and recognised, on the other hand, the right in any case, and generally speaking the expediency of direct State action towards those ends, it is impossible to deal satisfactorily with the relation of the Church to the University. But let it once be admitted that Church and University alike,—in the only sense in which they can be national institutions,—are means to ends, organizations in the interests of religion and education, and the question of their points of contact, as to mutual support or supposed antagonism, admits of more intelligible discussion. Obviously the question divides itself into two main branches.

I. The attitude of the University towards the Church.

II. Of the Church towards the University.

The attitude of the University towards the Church stands first in order of subject, because it is evidently in the University, rather than in the Church, that the reform or revolution is being initiated, which must modify the old and traditional connexion. And the

conditions of the problem are to determine,—first, what measures affecting the interests or supposed interests of the Church have been taken, or remain to be taken, by the University, in order to perfect its own internal reform; and secondly, what policy it is desirable that the Church on its side should pursue in presence of a reconstituted University.

I. The true character and function of a University have lately been traced out, in an inaugural address delivered at St. Andrew's by Mr. Mill; and the steps that have been taken, and still more which remain to be taken, in order to bring Oxford something nearer the ideal of a University, have also recently called forth a volume replete with invaluable criticism and suggestion, by the Rev. Mark Pattison. What concerns us here is only to resume so much of the subject as affects the relation of the University to the Church.

A University then, in the only sense in which it can be an institution worth preserving in the interests of a liberal policy, is in the *first place* a centre of science and philosophy; and in the *second place*, the head of the education of the country. It is of supreme importance that these ends be kept distinct, and the second in subordination to the first. The common, or newspaper, view of the University is that its function is *to teach*. Undoubtedly one function is to teach; but, in order to teach, it must have not only *whom*, but *what* to teach; in order to teach it must learn In other words, the primary use of a University is that it be the place where science or philosophy, or (to avoid irrelevant issues) the best and highest that is known by man, is studied for its own sake;

where "the intellectual treasures of the past," to quote Mr. Mill, are *preserved* and *increased* and *transmitted*. It is only in this last capacity,—as transmitting to the rising generation the highest intellectual possessions of the generation passing away,—that the University becomes the head of the education of the country. It is an inversion of sequence to assume that young men should go to the University to be prepared for life, and thence argue what the University should teach in order so to prepare them. The business of the University is to possess that which is worth teaching, and then the best preparation for life will be for young men to go there.

Assuming then this twofold function of the University as the centre of science and the head of education, what are the points of contact at which the character of the University has been and may be affected in the interest, or supposed interest, of the Church? What are the principal claims the University has to make, which a perverse policy might lead the Church into opposing?

(1.) As the home of the sciences, the University must demand that inquiry, the instrument of the sciences, and the expression of the results of inquiry, must be absolutely free; whereas the Church has in times past thought, and in part still thinks it necessary, in its own interests; to fetter and embarrass freedom of inquiry.

(2.) As the home of all the sciences, and not of some only—as embracing the complete cycle of human knowledge—the University must claim that theology and the kindred studies must take their proper place as subjects of investigation, whereas theology at present languishes because it is supposed only to be a laborious method of arriving at foregone conclusions.

(3.) As the centre of national education, the University must demand that no class of the community be excluded from its benefits, or itself be prevented from drawing upon the intellectual material of the whole nation.

(i.) The first of these requirements is negative merely. Practically it would mean mainly the removal of the remaining religious tests, and the breaking up of the clerical domination under which the University lies. In the former direction much has been done, but more remains for reformers still to do. The only direct tests that survive, are (*a*) the subscription to the Articles for the M.A. degree at Oxford, and the declaration of "*bonâ fide* membership of the Church of England" for the full rights of the M.A. degree at Cambridge; (*b*) the provisions of the Act of Uniformity which close the fellowships against Dissenters in both Universities. Both these remaining tests have been under parliamentary discussion, and from the course of recent debates and divisions we may hope that both are doomed. In the meantime, however, it is as well to indicate how vital is the point still at issue; for it seems sometimes to be assumed that in the abolition of subscription for matriculation and for the B.A. degree an immense concession has been made, with which we might well be expected, for a time at least, to remain content; whereas the fact is, that although a gross scandal has been removed, yet in matter of principle we have not advanced a single step. It was an outrage on decency and common sense to thrust upon the conscience of youths fresh from school a vast mass of religious dogma, which it was probable they had not

studied, and certain they could not comprehend. But the violation of intellectual freedom is far greater, indeed then first becomes serious, when the same restrictions are applied to men of mature mind. Though the attempt to bias conviction by interest be in every case alike immoral, yet there is some show of reason in marking out authoritatively the lines of thought for a boy. What is protested against in his case is rather the mode of exercising the authority than the authority itself. But when the pretence is set up of controlling by the dogmatic formularies of a past age the highest intelligence of the present, it is the authority itself which is the usurpation. And if the first function of a University, on which all the rest depend, be not to teach, but to learn—not to transmit what is received as true, but to determine by the only test possible, rational investigation, what shall be received as true,—if, in a word, a University be primarily a philosophical and scientific society—it is of infinitely *more* importance for the graduates than for the undergraduates, for the professors than for the scholars, that we should demand that condition without which inquiry is a farce and philosophy a mockery—absolute intellectual freedom. It is sometimes replied that the object of subscription is not to fetter the freedom either of thought or of its expression, but only to confine the exercise of particular offices to those who have freely arrived at certain definite conclusions considered necessary for the duties of those offices. It cannot, however, need much reflection to see that, as respects the University, its scientific character is no less destroyed if the effect of the system really be to fill its ranks with the honest partisans of one set of

opinions. Nor let it be supposed that by our contrivance we secure in the least the protected doctrines. It is the one supreme proof that the Creator, when he gave to man reason, gave it him under an imperative command to walk in the light of it, that the moment we attempt to bias or compel reason, we defeat our own objects. If by our system of penalties and exclusions we obtained a University which, with one voice, upheld the doctrine of the Established Church, all we should have done would be to render that testimony worthless; whilst we should have given an exaggerated and factitious value to the contrary tenets, the supporters of which could at least boast that their sincerity had been proved by the sacrifices they had made for conscience' sake. But of course no one for a moment supposes that the real effect of University subscription is to secure even a nominal respect for the protected doctrine. The only defence of the system, which corresponds to the facts of the case, is the miserable one, that a bad theory is rendered nugatory by a lax practice. Every one knows that speculation and discussion on all important questions of theology or philosophy or politics, are as free, perhaps freer, at Oxford than elsewhere. All that we have gained by our precautions is, that we have imported into the consideration of questions, which require above all things what Bacon calls "dry light"—*sine infusione voluntatis et affectuum*, a feverish temper of antagonism, reaction against an irritating usurpation, and the opportunity (freely used) for party insinuations of dishonesty.

But, it may be retorted,—"Even granted that the scientific or philosophic character of the University is impaired by the retention of religious tests upon opinion,

the Universities are after all mainly educational institutions, and it is not to be expected that parents will send their sons thither without some guarantee for their teachers' orthodoxy." In other words, parents professing to desire for their sons a liberal education, that is to say, an education giving to the whole mind the highest development of which it is capable, yet cannot trust the mind, instructed and exercised, freely to work out for itself its own conclusions. If parents set such store by orthodoxy, that is, if they prize so highly the opinions they hold as true, it may be assumed that it is not because they are *their* opinions, but because they are true. How preposterous, then, that they should shrink from submitting those opinions to the one test of truth which human beings possess—impartial investigation by fully instructed persons. For be it remembered that what is called "orthodoxy" is not an inward sense, a subjective apprehension of spiritual verities, —is not, in a word, religious faith, which each has an absolute right, nay, is absolutely bound to hold fast, as he finds it for himself and not another: on the contrary, it includes a multitude of objective statements, involving matters of history, of physical science, of speculative philosophy, on all of which it is absurd to pretend that any one has the right to pass judgment except to the extent to which he has really made himself acquainted with the evidence. If parents really claim that, on a number of questions falling under the sphere of these several sciences, there shall be in the Universities a reservation of the right of criticism, they are advancing a claim which makes a liberal education impossible. But the truth is that no such

claim is put forth by the general voice of the nation; the real source of the outcry raised against intellectual freedom in the Universities is the alarm of the sacerdotal party, at the collapse, in its supposed strongholds, of their authority. It is only necessary, in order to be assured of this, to compare the language of the catholicizing party amongst ourselves with the louder tones (of which it is only the echo) of the Catholic party proper in Europe. A claim proceeding from this source, when recognised as such, we may surely trust that the world has had experience enough to know how to deal with.

If parents seriously fear that the repeal of religious tests in the University would create an atmosphere of scepticism and controversy, which it would be unhealthy for youth to breathe, it would be well for them to consider for a moment what are the grounds of religious faith, as well as what are the chief irritants of religious controversy. Doubtless there are convictions, moral and religious, which it is unhealthy in the extreme for all, young or old, unnecessarily to bring up to the surface of disputation; and parents who possess such convictions know that they are such as they themselves received, in the first instance, by the tradition of education, and have verified afterwards by the pressure of life; such convictions they instil from infancy into their children as the truths by which, for all the evidence of them, they bid them live. Is it convictions of this kind that they think are protected, in themselves or in their children, by the signing of articles? If a process could have been devised most cunningly to bring into the very focus of negation the spiritual principles on which the life both of individuals and communities consciously or

unconsciously rests, what else would it have been but to cast them into the form of dogmatic propositions, mingled with much disputed and disputable matter, and demand for the whole, under penalties, unfeigned intellectual assent? And those who have watched most nearly the intellectual movements of our Universities, whether in one direction in the last generation, or in the opposite direction now, can hardly have failed to see how the temperature seems always to stand at fever-heat just round the points where, on the theory of subscription, controversy should be considered closed.

(ii.) The abolition of the remaining religious tests would remove the last *direct* trammel on the intellectual freedom of the University; indirectly, however, perhaps an equally important reform remains to be carried out, in the same direction, by withdrawing from the hands of the clerical order their monopoly of authority in the University. How complete is that monopoly, it is necessary to know the University intimately in order fully to realize. To take Oxford as the example. In the first place, all Heads of Houses except one, and all Divinity Professors, with a large proportion of the Fellows of Colleges, must be in holy orders. In the next place, it is made far more worth the while of the clerical than of the lay Fellows to remain as Tutors of Colleges, by the system of College livings. Again, in the government of the University, Congregation, which should consist of the resident body of Masters of Arts, includes not merely the residents in the University, but in the town of Oxford, who are chiefly the parish clergy. Once more, from Congregation there is an appeal to Convocation, which is practically the country clergy. Thus both the Colleges

and the University are, in the main, under clerical control. Obviously, then, it would be an incomplete measure to abolish religious tests for the University, so long as education in the University was in the hands of a class of men still otherwise bound by them. But, apart from these grounds, it is clearly not for the interests of any national institution to be wholly in the hands of a single order or profession. It is impossible but that the prejudices and interests of the class should unduly influence the direction of affairs. And in Oxford that prejudicial influence has been disastrously felt in many ways; in the election, under clerical influence, of men for important educational offices notoriously not on the ground of their real qualifications; in the jealousy shown by the leaders of the clerical party at every advance made in the University by physical science; and in the persistent persecution of eminent and devoted teachers in the University by the bigotry of a clerical faction. It is no special charge against the clergy to recall these things; possibly any other order, legal, medical, or scientific, might have been guilty of analogous acts; it is only necessary to note the mischief which invariably springs from a class monopoly of power. It is too obvious to need remark, that the requirement of holy orders has grown historically out of a state of society which now belongs to the past. When the clergy were the only learned order it was necessary that a University should be clerical. In the present day no one supposes that the clergy monopolize the Universities on account of their learning—it is learning, on the contrary, which in the supposed interests of the Church is compelled to wear a clerical garb.

(iii.) The changes already advocated would go far

towards meeting the third great need of the University at the present time—the resuscitation within it, as a real study, of theology. It is not enough that theology should not be suffered to hang as a dead weight on science and philosophy; theology in a University deserving the name must itself become scientific and philosophic: its spirit must be that pure love of truth for its own sake in which philosophy began; its method, the rational critical method by which science has made its ground, step by step, sure. It must know no bias, save towards truth; recognise no authority but the authority of reason. Can it be wondered, then, that theology languishes in the University, set as it is under the shadow of vast established interests, and treated as if it were the actual property of the ecclesiastical power? Any science under such conditions is doomed to sterility; independent minds turn instinctively away; those only are left who are too feeble to think at all, or else interested enough, or servile enough, to think as they are bidden. Theological speculation at Oxford, when it has had vitality in it at all, has always swept along its own course, cut out its own channels, in neglect always, in defiance generally, of all prescription; whilst the University has contented itself with exacting an absurd minimum of knowledge for the pass degree, and distributing through its professors the certificates required by the bishops. Yet surely it is not too much to expect that our Universities, even in theology, might really teach; might at least do for their own students as much as many a humbler foreign University has done for students over the whole world—give an impulse and direction to learning. There is no way in which the Universities could render, just now,

greater service to the nation. On every side we hear controversy; every where we are told scepticism is making progress. Yet the one real remedy seems the least thought of—the determination of the truth by adequate investigation. The various religious bodies have their remedy, which is to *assume* truth, and concentrate their organization in violently asserting it; and liberals, for the most part, seem content with showing how much may be said and done, whilst theological truth is left undecided. Meanwhile there is a work, for which a University is specially fitted,—*patient exhaustive inquiry.* Such a work is advanced neither by violence nor evasion; it requires the life-devotion of the real student. At the Universities there are magnificent appliances for the task—splendid libraries, rich endowments already devoted to the subject, the tradition and genius of the place. Yet theology alone languishes at the Universities, or rather as a University study is practically extinct—not from any lack of interest in theological questions amongst the more thoughtful of the young men (a keen, even feverish, interest in theological controversy has been for many years the special characteristic of Oxford), but simply because theology alone of the sciences is not free. The official teaching of the University is understood not to aim higher than at reaching foregone conclusions. No mental endowment of genius, no acknowledged profundity of learning, would weigh in the appointment to a divinity chair against the suspicion of unsoundness, that is, of divergence from commonly received opinions. Can a science breathe under conditions such as these?

(iv.) A reform which should give complete intellectual freedom within the University, would at the same time

accomplish an end no less desirable, in the admission to the University on equal terms, of whole classes of the community now shut out from its highest privileges on the ground of religious nonconformity. Much has already been effected in this direction. Dissenters have already access to the University as undergraduates, and although some of the Colleges might raise impediments against their admission, yet in others (and those for the most part the more distinguished) they would find themselves cordially welcomed; no Dissenter need fear that his nonconformity would place him under any sort of social disadvantage; and in the more liberal Colleges at least, he may be assured that his liberty of conscience and religious worship would be scrupulously respected. But he could not proceed to the M.A. degree without signing the articles, neither could he hold a fellowship without complying with the provisions of the Act of Uniformity. Thus he is not merely deprived of the highest rewards of his industry, but finds himself shut out from the government both of the Colleges and the University, and placed necessarily in a position of toleration rather than equality, as the subject of a community of which he cannot become the full citizen. It is not to be wondered at that Dissenters, as a body, should have declined to avail themselves of this half-open door, and should prefer biding the time when their access to the University shall not be clogged by derogatory conditions. Their right is indeed incontestable. The Universities are theirs as much as ours. The Universities are the property, not of the Established Church, but of the nation, if the Church is to be distinguished from the nation; or if the Church be taken to be in fact, as it is in theory, identical with

the nation, then the Dissenters are members, nonconforming members, of the Church, and as such have a right, as far as possible, to share in all benefits derivable even from Church property.

There is so much confusion in the language often used about property as held by public institutions, that a word of explanation is perhaps necessary. What is called the property of the Church, or of the University, is simply so much national property devoted to a special purpose of public utility. And when we speak of the right of all citizens to such property, it is not of course meant that each has a right to rush in and possess himself of what he can; but that all have an equal right to the advantages which the institution is designed to confer. When we speak, then, of the right of Dissenters to share all benefits derivable from Church property, it is not therefore meant that they have a right to possess themselves of its revenues in order to build chapels or endow ministers. Such a proceeding might be perfectly legitimate in certain cases, as for instance that of the monstrous, but it is hoped moribund,* anomaly of the Irish Establishment. But this is a proceeding of another kind, not a sharing in the benefits of Church property, but making it cease to be Church property at all. The right of Dissenters under both heads seems clear enough. In the first place they are entitled to demand that the Church, as a national institution, shall cease to exist the moment it can be shown that the ends contemplated in its maintenance are either undesirable or attainable more effectively by other instrumentality; and in the second place, assuming that in the opinion of the legislature a

* March 1868.

National Church, that is, a system of public worship and religious instruction maintained at the national cost, is necessary or expedient, the Dissenter is still justified in claiming that he shall not be treated as a criminal on account of his nonconformity; not excluded, that is, by way of penalty, from any advantages that he *can* avail himself of, simply because there are others which on conscientious grounds he is compelled to sacrifice. If, for instance, on account of divergence of belief he cannot join in the public worship of the Church, he is not therefore to be debarred from sending his children to Church schools. The Dissenter becomes unreasonable when he considers himself outraged by the existence of a National Church of whose doctrines he disapproves, as if that amount of compromise were not demanded in the very nature of civil life. Precisely the same argument applies to the Universities. The duty of the legislature is to see that the education they offer is the best that is attainable, and that access to it is opened to the greatest number possible. No one has a right to complain simply because the education offered is not such as he would individually prefer, or because he is personally unable to obtain it. But no grievance can be better founded than that of important classes of the community who find themselves shut out from equal participation in the provision the State makes for learning because they have already been compelled, on conscientious grounds, to forego their participation in the provision it makes for religion. Yet this is precisely the position in which the Dissenters are placed in the Universities. If Churchmen would only clear their minds of the unworthy sentiment, inherited from the age of intolerance, that there is

something wrong in being a Dissenter, that a Dissenter ought in some way to be punished for his dissent, if not directly by penalties, at least indirectly by the sacrifice of advantages, they could hardly fail to see the injustice of the situation. It is sometimes contended, as a set off against the plea of justice, that the interests of religion are at stake; that Nonconformists, if admitted to the government of the College and the Universities, would destroy the religious character of the education given in them. If the "religious character of the education" means the forcing the religion of the Established Church upon the conscience of all students alike, whatever their own or their parents' convictions, nothing can be more desirable than that it should be destroyed, and it is precisely with that purpose that the presence of Dissenters in the governing body is demanded. Nothing more would be required to justify their refusal to rest satisfied with their present exclusion than the admission on the part of their opponents, that their presence there is necessary to protect the interests of nonconformist undergraduates. But if, on the other hand, it is feared that the influence of Dissenters in the Councils of the University would interfere with the education in Church principles of the sons of Churchmen, what conceivable ground is there for supposing that such a policy would be, I will not say carried out, but attempted? Surely the fear, if it exist, has its root in the bad conscience of intolerance, which always expects the measure it has dealt to be dealt to it again. To exorcise the apprehension it is only necessary to act justly.

But apart even from the plea of right, which however seems in itself sufficient, nothing can well be conceived

more desirable than this complete nationalizing of our Universities. In the first place, it is a grievous loss to the community that important classes should be excluded from the highest intellectual culture. Again, it is an equal loss to the University that it should be prevented from drawing upon the intellectual material of the whole nation. Once more, no opportunity so good offers itself for healing religious division as is presented by the influence of a common education. Not indeed in the way of proselytizing, which for the most part is purely noxious. We do not desire the presence of Nonconformists at the Universities that we may make them Churchmen, or that they may make us Dissenters. It is better to leave direct action of that kind alone, and let the various religious communions work out independently whatever elements of truth each may be possessed of. External fusion will then come readily enough, when desirable. The animosity and alienation which subsists between the different Churches is both mischievous and irrational; and every influence which would tend to its extirpation, deserves to be carefully fostered. There has been much talk of late about the restoration of Unity and Catholicity. We have seen the hand of fellowship held out east and west, and the representatives of scattered communities gathered together for ecclesiastical conference in our own metropolis. Possibly to some the Unity may have savoured too much of a concentration of sacerdotal power, and the Catholicity may have seemed even more remarkable on the side of its exclusion than of its comprehension. But, granted the motive and the principle, what more effective step could be taken in the desired direction

than by bringing the various divided, and often hostile sects, within our own nation, under the softening and healing influence of a common intellectual culture.

II. It is evident that a complete reform of the Universities in the direction indicated—the removal of the last remnants of religious sectarianism, the inclusion of theology in the circle of the sciences freely and manfully studied, the breaking up of the clerical domination which has long reigned supreme, and the admission of Dissenters, on terms of complete equality, to all academical privileges—must involve a complete recasting of the relations of the Church to the University. The present connexion can hardly be maintained unimpaired if the Universities are to be carried forward decisively in a liberal direction whilst the policy of the Church is stagnant or reactionary. There seem three distinct lines of action which the Church might take, in view of University Reform: (1) It might try to hold back the Universities; (2) it might separate from them; (3) it might go with them.

(1.) The first course is the traditional clerical policy, but to those who study carefully the signs of the times its practicability must seem now more than doubtful. Possibly for some time yet to come reactionary influences may be able, both from within and from without, to hamper the progress of University Reform. Parliament may be prevailed on a little longer to retain what still is left of the old system of restriction and exclusion, and in the University itself an attempt may be made, by the leaders of the ecclesiastical party, to repress the reviving intellectual life which has made itself felt in the Oxford

schools. But the ground is already cut away beneath their feet. In the democratic era, which our Conservative statesmen have been at such pains to hasten, there will not be much question about subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles or the Act of Uniformity. It may be difficult under the conditions of a democratic society to maintain the position of the Universities at all: it will be impossible, except on the broadest liberal basis. A democracy is a potent engine for obtaining the palpable material advantages which lie within the horizon of the popular view; it may appear a more doubtful instrument in dealing with the remoter interests of science and the higher education. Yet a democracy, properly appealed to, is not without a genuine reverence for real intellectual eminence, as the election of Mr. Mill at Westminster proves. But it is quite certain, from the last-named event, as from other signs, that if a democratic Parliament be persuaded to leave to the Universities the vast national revenues which they now hold, it will assuredly not be in the interests of a retrograde ecclesiastical policy. The leaders into whose hands the ultimate political decision will be thrown, are certainly not those who would be chosen by the sacerdotal party. We may therefore regard with more complacency the efforts of that party within the Universities, working as they are with a political mine under their feet. Besides, it is only the outer framework of the educational course which they can even attempt to control; underneath there is a current running broad and strong, which is fed from a thousand sources that no academical legislation can close. "The real teachers" (it is truly said) "are now books"—and the books read in the Universities are not

those only which are prescribed for the degree. The bookshops are open, the libraries are open; and the intellectual curiosity of young men, once aroused, would certainly not be laid by an academical decree, re-arranging in an anti-philosophical sense the subjects of examination. We may dismiss then, for once and all, the fears that any clerical influence will succeed permanently in resisting the progress of the University.

(2.) A far more serious danger is, that in the event of the liberalization of the Universities, the authorities of the Church should endeavour to break the connexion of Church and University at the point where it is of most practical moment,—the education in the Universities of the clergy. Already we are familiar with the complaint that the number and calibre of the candidates for ordination from the Universities is on the decline, and that their place has to be filled by literates and students from theological colleges. Should it be found that in point of "soundness" the advantage is, in the eyes of the Church authorities, on the side of the latter, we may have the University degree not merely dispensed with, but discouraged. Nor is such an apprehension by any means chimerical, if what is called the Catholic revival is to gather force in the English Church. The Catholic party is, in principle, the same everywhere; it is only a more imperfect logical coherence which distinguishes the Anglo-Catholic from the Roman; and the head of the party himself continually insists, with much vigour of expression, that between Catholic principles and Liberal principles there can be no compromise,—as indeed it is hardly possible that there can be two ways of seeing—viz. by opening your eyes and by shutting them. Con-

sequently, the authorities of the Catholic party proper have, on mature deliberation, resolved to discourage the resort of their youth to our Universities: it only remains for the quasi-Catholic party in the English Church, if they cannot mould the Universities to their will, to follow the example set them in so high a quarter, and at least attempt to secure a separate education, after their own conception, for the clergy. Should they in such a movement carry with them any considerable section of the English Church, the blow to its national influence would be fatal. Historically, no less than as matter of present fact, the whole force and meaning of the English Church is in its national or lay character;—historically, for whatever stray threads of the old cloth were woven into the new garment, yet substantially the English Church was the creation of the Reformation: and the Reformation here, even more than elsewhere, was in its essence a national movement. It was neither a self-Reformation, as it has been sometimes called, of a branch of the Church Catholic, nor was it the breaking up of the old Catholic organization by purely revolutionary agency. The special character of the English Reformation was, that its organ was the national legislature. It was in fact the assertion by the nation of its right to constitute itself spiritually; and as such, from its very completeness, it carried over with it the clergy, and worked into the new order of things the framework of the old system. As a result, the position of the English clergy has since been essentially that of a profession; such authority as they possess (apart from personal character and influence) is drawn from their recognised place in the body politic. Any one who will compare the feeling of the Catholic

towards his priest, on the one side, or of the Dissenter to his minister on the other, with the way in which the ordinary Englishman regards his clergyman, can hardly fail to make this observation. The one thing important for the Catholic is that his priest should be really possessed of the supernatural powers conferred in ordination. That which the Dissenter regards exclusively is that the preacher should preach what the hearer holds to be the truth. The Churchman, whilst in part sympathising with both, attaching a certain weight to episcopal ordination, judging also for himself broadly of the truth of the doctrines taught him, yet in the main accepts his clergyman as guaranteed to him by the institutions of the country. Thus the connexion of Church and State, which to the Catholic is indifferent and to the Dissenter for the most part obnoxious, is not an accident, but of the essence of the Church of England. On the withdrawal of that connexion the English Church would fall asunder into several sects, one of which, claiming the old title, would be distinguished from the rest by gravitating towards Rome.

Meanwhile there is no point at which that connexion is of more importance, than the education of the clergy at the national Universities. It is certainly not too much to say that the loss of a University education would affect the position and influence of the English clergy far more than, for instance, a supposed flaw discovered in the apostolical succession. Nor is there anything in the least unreasonable in the ordinary English attitude. It is possible for a layman, without special theological training, to exercise his right of private judgment in several ways. He may once for

all resign it, as the Catholic does, in presence of an authority which he has convinced himself is, in things spiritual, a supernatural guide; or he may exercise it throughout, at his own risk of error, without reference to any authority whatever; or again, without resigning it, he may assign whatever weight seems justified by experience to such qualifications as it is in the power of the State to guarantee generally to the clergy, amongst which a liberal education is the most obvious.

But the loss of influence in lay estimation is the least important consideration; the real loss would be to the clergy themselves if their education were transferred from the Universities to clerical seminaries. Apart from all consideration of its intrinsic value, it is of vital importance that such education as the clergy receive should be in common with the laity. No Church can work successfully unless harmony be secured between clergy and laity. In Catholic countries such harmony is provided for by the complete submission, in theory at least, of the people to the priesthood, and amongst the Nonconformist societies by as complete a dependence, in practice, of the minister on the congregation. The one chief excellence of our own system is, that it leaves greater individual liberty to the clergyman than he could possess perhaps in any other Church, Catholic or Protestant, whilst it secures in the main harmony between the general tone of the laity and clergy by subjecting both to the same educational and social influences. It can hardly indeed be denied that the characteristic of the English clergy is, that they are thoroughly one in thought and feeling, not to say in prejudice also, with the temper of the English mind.

Of course a communion of aspirations and ideas is not itself a thing on which to congratulate clergy and laity, unless the aspirations be noble and the ideas true. Still less should we pride ourselves on the working of any institution which fosters our national prejudices. Undoubtedly the first office of a University is to widen our intellectual horizon, and it is a poor boast to say of an education that it is truly English, when we ought rather to be able to say that it is truly liberal. But to confess that our highest education is at best imperfect is not to admit that, such as it is, it should not be given to all alike who are able to receive it. Nor should we gain much by exchanging the prejudices and pettinesses that are national for those of an order or caste. Oxford and Cambridge may need great reforms, on their own account, before they can take their proper places in the world of science, or do all they might do for the education of the country; but it must be a strangely constituted mind that would not find in them, even as they are, fresher air and a broader day than in the most carefully tended theological college.

Possibly it may be urged that, as training places for the clergy, the Universities are specially faulty from the absence of any really effective theological teaching. No doubt a University is but a maimed body so long as any of the higher faculties are in abeyance. But we must not forget that it is of far more importance to recognise the rational method, which is the instrument of all knowledge, than to impart knowledge even on the highest subjects; and if knowledge is to be imparted on the condition of the abnegation of reason, if teaching

claim not examination, but acceptance, it should have no place in a University at all. A young man is infinitely better equipped for the attainment of theological truth who has been taught to think with the whole force of his intelligence as he reads Plato, and is then set to think for himself as he reads St. Paul, than if he is set to read St. Paul at first under mental conditions that prevent the exercise of real thought at all.

(3.) But it is time to ask,—is there not a worthier policy open to the Church than either to hang as a drag on University Reform, or to withdraw into jealous and timid isolation from all contact with a movement which it cannot stay? What has the Church to fear from the influence of a thoroughly liberal University? The emancipation sought for is sought for simply in the interest of truth, which must suffer to the extent that reason, the organ of truth, is hampered. By what *arrière pensée* are we haunted that we should dread the light of a rational inquiry? Is it a secret fear that there are dogmas which could not stand the stress of free criticism? But do we hold our dogmas for the truth's sake, or truth because it is our dogma? A Church claiming infallibility is irrevocably committed to a position once taken; a Church such as ours, based on the renunciation of that claim, is committed rather to open-mindedness in receiving truth. It is not probable only, it is certain, that if knowledge be progressive there must be, even on the highest subjects, a continual reconsidering of our conclusions. Things once held for certain are seen to be doubtful; doubtful questions on completer evidence are decided. If knowledge be

progressive, we must ever have a single eye for new light; if knowledge in things spiritual be not progressive, our Church is in a false position. It is not a fault of detail; it is suicidal for any Church, sprung from the Reformation, to hesitate here. We must go either backwards or forwards; we must make election of our principle and method; we cannot, as Protestants do, reject the authority of tradition, whilst yet we practically assume, on no better authority, all our first premises. Protestantism is becoming more and more restless and irrational, because it has before it an alternative which it has not the courage to face. It cannot, or will not, see that the Reformation was a first step, and that the second step has now to be taken if the first is not to be stultified. Protestantism, as a phase of progress, has done its work; it was a protest against Roman aberrations from principles held in common with Rome; the question now is as to the principles—and Protestantism is of no avail here. As a consequence, it seems everywhere playing back into the hands of the Catholic party, because it has not faith enough or strength enough to go forward, to be consistent, to become,—what it must become or else fall to pieces,—Rational Religion. Never was there a grander career before any Church than lies before our own Church now, had she but leaders who dared to lead her; only, like all great careers, it is difficult and arduous, and the passing lights of compromise will hardly hold out longer. If the Church of England is to be indeed the Church of the future, it can only be by taking deeper ground than she has taken before; it is neither as Catholic nor as Protestant that she will hold her own in the rising

generation; she must become the Church whom the truth has made free.

Or is it not so much the fear of rationalism as a jealousy of dissent and irritation at the loss of an old prerogative which would throw the influence of the Church against the nationalizing of the Universities? Surely nothing can be less worthy of a Church than such a feeling. A Church should claim to be national only in the sense of serving, in things spiritual, the whole nation. The only right it should guard jealously is the right of ministering to all equally—to those not the least, who least value its ministrations. To haggle for exclusive privileges is to abdicate its position, and become a sect. A voluntary society may very fairly claim that what benefits it has to confer should be confined to its own members; a National Church should set no limit to its giving but the willingness to receive. It should bestow the more readily the lesser things, when it is unable to bestow the greater. The claim, then, that Dissenters should be excluded from a common education because they exclude themselves, on whatever grounds, from common religious worship, is a claim which not only (as has been already argued) the State should refuse to grant, but which, much more, the Church should scorn to make. A Church at once liberal and comprehensive, open on its intellectual side towards all knowledge, inclusive on its popular side, as far as possible, of the religious life of the whole nation, would be one in sympathy and aim with a free and national University. Between them, they would do more than any other combined influence towards the solution of the problem which above all presses urgently at the present time,—

the relation of science to faith, of the religion of the many to the knowledge of the few. Is there no way in which we may be saved from an arid schism between what are after all the two sides of human nature, whether social or individual? It would surely be a fatal calamity should science and learning pursue their way as the possessions of a narrow intellectual clique, whilst religion became more and more allied with ignorance and want of culture,—the reflexion back to the popular mind of merely popular notions. From such a consummation it is the mission of Church and University, by their joint action, to preserve the nation. On the one hand, science at the University can be religious, not in the false sense of religion putting a band about learning, but in the true sense in which only science can be consecrated, *by its uses*, by devoting itself to the moral and spiritual welfare of the people. Theology, as a science, needs above all others this consecration. Theology, without a practical outcome towards religion, tends to become barren and frigid. Theology is the knowledge of God; as a science, it is that knowledge historically studied, as it has been formulated in the great conceptions which have guided the life of men and nations. The student of theology can therefore study it but incompletely if he make himself acquainted only with the historical conceptions, and not with the moral and spiritual forces amidst which they have moved and worked, and by which their vitality is still tested. Theology, therefore, as a science at a University, gains infinitely in life and reality when it counts amongst its students the national clergy, whose office is to bring it to the test of practice, just as the science of medicine might

run into a mere pedantry, were it not made the basis of the practical art of healing.

On the other hand, as the science of the University, through the Church, becomes a moral force, and is consecrated in the national religion, so through the connexion of the Church with the University the national religion is enlightened and regulated by learning. That such an influence of the clergy, as a comparatively instructed class, may preserve the popular mind from the various forms of fanaticism or bigotry which are the offspring of ignorance, is too obvious to need enforcing. Far more important is the consideration that the more the clergy take their place in the nation as an educated profession, the more hope is there that they will abandon the essentially unchristian attitude they tend to assume as a priesthood; or rather that they will be recognised as priests only as all men are priests, by the right of offering to God a reasonable service. The one pressing danger of the Church just now, and through the Church a danger to the nation, will be averted just so far as the clergy are kept in the broad daylight of a common life and education. The instincts of sacerdotalism have always made it feel that its illusions cannot exist except in a seclusion from common life and common reason.

Just as these pages are passing to the press, a protest, or rather a cry of agony, has issued from the party at Oxford, which hitherto has resisted all reform in the University, addressed this time, not to the legislature, but to the Archbishop of Canterbury, imploring him to stay the sacrilegious hand of the legislature from letting into the University the flood-tide of infidelity which is still shut out by the sorely damaged defences of subscription,

and depriving the Church in the University of the last remnants of her once exclusive prerogatives. Such a declaration, from those high in ecclesiastical position, that truth without artificial supports cannot trust in itself against error, and that our own Church has little need to be careful for the rights of others, but much for the privileges she deems her own—is perhaps a sufficient justification for one, who in a humbler sphere is of a contrary opinion, going over a somewhat weary and overworn ground by way of asserting it.

V.

THE CHURCH AND THE CONGREGATION.

By the Church will be meant, in the course of this Essay, those who profess a belief in Christ; by a Congregation, a section of the Church habitually assembling in order to fulfil the object of the Church. It is obvious that before the discussion of the question, how the congregation can best fulfil the object of the Church, there must come a decision of the question what that object is. Such decisions have been various. The glory of God, the happiness of man, the education of the ignorant, the relief of the poor, the preservation of order, the inculcation of dogmas—these and many other results have been openly stated, or are silently believed, to be the legitimate objects of the Church which Christ founded. For ourselves we will be content with saying that the only true object of Christ's Church is to make men Christ's disciples; and to those who ask further how we shall know among a crowd of unreal believers who are Christ's real disciples, we answer—by their loving one another. Christians, orthodox or heterodox, can scarcely for shame ask a sign of Christianity different from that which was appointed by Christ; and those who are not Christians, and who do not care about a sign of Christianity, because Christianity is not their object, must

confess that a higher object cannot be proposed to a Church than that of making men love one another. We therefore are agreed that the sign (as Christians would say), or the object (as non-Christians would say), of a true Church is the creation or increase of mutual love among men. It follows thence that a congregation attains the sign, or fulfils the object, of the Church, so far as it generates or increases mutual love directly among the members of the congregation, and indirectly and consequently love for the rest of their fellow-men. For fear of misunderstanding, it may have been well to make a distinction between the object and the sign of a true Church; but if the sign cannot be present without the object, if the attainment of the sign implies the attainment of the object, then there is little difference between the two. The object of the physician stooping over the drowned man is to restore life, not respiration; but as respiration is the unvarying sign of life, he may well be excused if he declares that his object is to restore respiration. So likewise Christians, knowing that love implies life, may be excused if sometimes they appear to confuse the two; and having it on high authority that the criterion of their love of the God or Christ whom they have not seen, is to be sought in their power of loving their fellow-men whom they have seen, may be also excused for appearing sometimes to make it their final object to see, know, and love their fellow-man.

It may be objected that heathen philosophers might propose to themselves, and might attain, a similar object; might succeed in "loving one another," and yet not be Christ's disciples. To some minds peculiarly constituted it may be a painful admission that men and

women who have never heard the name of Christ, have achieved the difficult task of loving one another; others will feel glad to be forced by history to recognise that many a man has believed, and can believe, in virtue, who has never believed in virtue incarnate: and that such belief has worked its natural effects in a morality which bears the same relation to Christian love as an Idea bears to a Man with an Idea. That is not now our question. Whatever may be the criterion of the successful pursuit of morality, the criterion of success in serving Christ is, or ought to be, among Christian priests and Christian people, the degree in which we find ourselves able to love one another. This criterion is intelligible and tangible, and under various forms has been repeatedly ordained by Christ Himself.

How can congregations subserve this purpose, or train men to do this most difficult of things? In two ways. In the first place a congregation may by some means or other make men understand the character of Christ and trust in Christ, and consequently trust in humanity. We see every day how meeting an honest man increases our belief in humanity; how contact with dishonest men and selfish men shakes and impairs that belief. It is therefore only natural that those who really believe that Christ was a man, and realize Christ's character and trust in Him, should find their belief in humanity thereby greatly strengthened and increased. If therefore a congregation can help men to realize Christ and trust in Christ, it will thus help men to love one another; and this is the first way in which a congregation can attain the sign, or fulfil the object, of the true Church.

But there is a second way. It is true that a man will find it easier to love his neighbours when he has realized Christ; but it is also true that a man will not find it easy to love his neighbours unless he has succeeded in realizing them. I may well say *realizing* his neighbours, for we do not realize our neighbours, as a rule. We do not know what they are; we know them all the less for such intercourse as is afforded by society; we know something of our brothers and sisters, something, perhaps a good deal, of old schoolfellows, something sometimes of college friends; but of the men and women with whom we meet together, Sunday after Sunday, to worship the common Father, next to nothing. Now it is impossible for a good man to know any other man, though he be the most hardened criminal upon earth, without loving him. And even average men for the most part love one another the more they know of one another. But knowledge of men does not mean merely acquaintance with their outsides, their manner of dressing and of dining, their tastes and their opinions, such as society already affords us; it means something far deeper of which society knows nothing. If the congregation can furnish this missing knowledge, this will be the second way in which a congregation fulfils the object of the Church.

The sum of what has been said is this:—that a congregation ought to be a factory of philanthropy, depending for its success upon two processes, the increase of the knowledge of Christ's nature, and the increase of the knowledge of human nature. The two processes are mutually interdependent, but for convenience they may be considered separately.

How then can men know Christ the better for meeting together? Is it not more natural to suppose that in a quiet study, a kind of churchyard of the great thinkers of the world, whose living, speaking monuments, more durable than brass or pyramid, stand in close order round the room, suggestive of great deeds and noble thoughts and undying aspirations, surrounded by books of science, history, and devotion, by the commentaries of ancient piety and the illustrations of modern criticism—ought not a man to be able most easily in such a learned solitude as this, to draw back the eighteen veils of eighteen centuries and see Christ as He is? Or might we not expect that a bright spring morning, with the immeasurable sky for roof, the lark for our song of praise, and the natural incense of the grass and flowers, would, if any force of circumstances could, give us a sympathy with the Father Who made the world and with Him Who came to show us the Father? And yet experience must have convinced many a man that neither a quiet study nor a solitary walk so effectually attunes the mind to the thought of Christ as a heartfelt participation in congregational worship. We need not quote texts for this to prove it ought to be so; we need only accept it as a fact, and explain it as we explain other facts. It may be strange, but it is not more strange than that mysterious and simultaneous thrill called "Panic," which in the ancient times was attributed to the immediate influence of the god, spreading through hosts of men a feeling seemingly inexplicable, but not on that account less powerful. That men going through the "rhythmic drill" of worship, recognising a common Father in a unity of actions, songs, and words, should feel an increased sense

of spiritual unity, an increased sense of brotherhood, and consequently an increased sense of sonhood, is surely not so very strange. Strange or not, it is true. It may be strange that we cannot say "Our Father" so earnestly in the study as in the church, just as it may be weak in us to pray for our daily bread as well as to pray "Thy will be done;" but men are men, and must be taken as they are; facts must be accepted, and it is a fact that men more readily realize the common Father in public than in solitary worship. And the recognition of a common Father implies the recognition of that which Christ wished us to recognise, and of Christ Himself; and thus the influence of congregational worship enables us to recognise Christ.

If therefore we wish to increase this wholesome influence, we shall be careful to increase all that brings out a sense of unity in congregational worship, while we shall banish as an "offence" all that creates a sense of disunion and discord. Viewed in this light, even the details of congregational worship assume importance; and, though they cannot be discussed here, the mention of two or three may serve to illustrate the principle which should pervade them all. For example, all the worshippers should look in one direction. The choir should be the congregation. A separate choir is a mark of inappropriateness in the form of worship or inertness in the worshippers. But if there must be a choir, it should not be dressed differently from the other worshippers, and the singers should be placed, according to this theory, in such a position as will not prevent them from being confounded with the rest of the congregation, while they are enabled to perform their

duty, and no more than their duty, of leading those who are so insufficiently educated in the simplest elements of singing as to be unable to sing at all without such assistance. The practice which has for centuries placed the faces of the choristers in a direction at right angles to the congregational line of sight, divided from the congregation by a partition, and distinguished from them by difference of dress, is a consistent development of another theory, making, as it does, a marked division between the exoteric human worshippers and the esoteric celebrators of the worship, who are supposed to be infected with the divine contagion of the rites they are performing, and to be raised for the time to the position of white-robed angelic spectators of human adoration hymning heavenly songs, through the midst of whose ranks the exoteric crowd of inferior mortals, rising step by step towards the holier ground, passes upwards towards the holiest of all into the immediate presence and contact of God Himself,—a theory most picturesque and most intelligible, but not the theory advocated in this essay. The minister should be as far as possible indistinguishable from those whose devotions he leads. The seats of the poor should be indistinguishable from the seats of the rich, and the partitions between the seats, if any, should be unobtrusive. The proportions of the building should be suggestive of unity in multitudinousness; there should be no distracting decorations, pictorial or otherwise, no petty symbolisms to set men thinking instead of feeling. The worship should carry out the same idea of unity, and should adapt itself to the particular congregation. It is absurd, and will hereafter be recognised as absurd, to expect that worshippers at the West End and at the

East End of London, in little rural parishes and in great crowded towns, should naturally adopt the same form of expression for their worship.

Now, above all, worship must be natural. Provided that the form of worship expresses most naturally the feelings of the congregation, no sensible man will be disposed (unless it be unlawful) to put down, though he may deplore, any kind of service, however bald or florid, unattractive or sensuous, it may seem to him. It is better that the children of men should speak to their Divine Father, as to their human fathers, naturally though wrongly, than rightly but unnaturally. Therefore it is desirable that in all congregations there should be a council of laymen, composed of a certain portion of the worshippers to represent the whole of the congregation, and to determine, within certain limits, the form of worship (for example, the amount of music, and the kind of music) desirable in the public service. There are clergymen who are desirous of meeting the natural wants of their congregation, being themselves perfectly indifferent in the matter; and such men often have to grope in the dark because they have not the means by which to ascertain what the congregation really want. It is in all cases desirable that the change should come, if it come at all, not from the clergyman, but from the congregation. That is the only security for its being natural. Without that security, the change may be natural to the clergyman, but it by no means follows that it will be natural to the congregation.

It may indeed be objected that this let-alone system, if adopted by the clergy, would have perpetuated many of the abuses in public worship which are happily now

rare. Had the clergy waited for the laity to innovate, it may be thought that high-backed pews and dissonant psalmody would still be the rule instead of the exception. But it would not be so. At least it would not be so if the clergy did their duty. There are other ways of influencing congregations besides altering their pet peculiarities of worship, subverting or lowering their pews, changing their hymn-books, and substituting a tasteful, unnatural service, in place of a tasteless service rendered natural by many deeply-rooted associations. The clergyman has his pulpit, has his week-day cathedra, from which he can speak with authority. Let him create the want before he talks about satisfying it. Let him make old things unnatural before making all things new. Had the English clergy been wise enough to adopt this course, every member of every congregation would feel to some extent responsible for the efficiency of the congregational machinery, and to some extent influenced by that interest, which always attaches to responsibility. Such wisdom would have been the wisdom of the serpent, but not inconsistent with the harmlessness of doves. But they have not been wise, and the consequence of their folly is extant in languid congregations and isolated priests.

It has appeared that, if for nothing else, for the regulation of the periodical worship, opportunities for the meeting of the worshippers are desirable. And this leads us to the second question, how far it is desirable to create or to increase such opportunities for other reasons, and especially in order that men may have the means of knowing one another. A "serious person" warned Wesley in his youth that "the Bible knows nothing

of solitary religion. Sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven; you must therefore find companions, or make them." That "serious person" was right. And the uncontradicted statement* which lately appeared in the columns of the *Times*, under a name of high authority, to the effect that the Wesleyans outnumber the Anglicans throughout the world, bears witness to the influence of the Wesleyan classes. Granting that the inclusive liberality of the Wesleyan system (which admits all men of any form of belief, "let them be Churchmen or Dissenters, Presbyterians or Independents," and which requires but one condition from them, "a real desire to save their souls") explains something of their success; it does not explain why Churchmen or Dissenters, Presbyterians or Independents, should leave their original communion for the Wesleyans, unless they found among their new fellow-worshippers the satisfaction of some want hitherto unsatisfied. One cannot open the pages of a report of the Gospel Propagation Society without finding a piteous moan over the necessity of new exertion, because the "Wesleyans or the Romanists have established themselves in this district." What is it that has procured John Wesley, a religious teacher of little more than a century's standing, more adherents than can be boasted by the Anglican Church, with its rich revenues, ancient associations, and its bishops? What is it that puts a modern sect of the eighteenth century abreast with the colossus of Rome in the race for proselytes throughout our colonies? It is the Wesleyan class-system; an attempt to carry out a law of nature and a saying of Christ,—an attempt very imperfect, and

* The letter is dated 18th September, 1867.

tainted with a certain vulgarity, but strong in the strength of its naturalness and Christianity.

Fortunately, men are better than their systems,—and the Wesleyans are no exceptions to this rule. The system may require from each member nothing more than a "real desire to save" his particular soul; but doubtless many members are divinely unsystematic, and require something more from themselves. If one may without offence attach the epithet of "vulgar" to any system which aims at high objects, but does not suggest the noblest motives for such aims, then, in this exceptional sense of the word, it must be admitted that the Wesleyan system in itself (by which we certainly do not mean the Wesleyans) is "vulgar." It subordinates social to individual considerations in an unnatural way. A man who says, "I want to make companions, because without them I cannot go to heaven," must be called, in default of a better epithet, "vulgar," for he is selfishly unnatural. There are some things that ought to be regarded as ends in themselves, and are spoiled and vulgarized when they are regarded as means to any other end. If an angel from heaven were to proclaim that marriage is essential to salvation, marriage itself would be vulgarized by the proclamation. Or to take another and more familiar instance: who does not feel that all the favour and all the zest of a convivial meeting would be dulled in a moment if the host were to take advantage of a break in the conversation to remind his friends that the object of their meeting was to amuse one another? The guests would feel, and justly, that the object of their meeting was simply to meet in a natural way,

and that, if the amusement did not come naturally, it had better not come at all.

Therefore it cannot be but that there must be an artificiality approaching vulgarity in co-religious meetings where the object of saving their own souls is strongly impressed upon the members. It is fortunately demonstrable that men have been so possessed with the spirit of sympathy as to break down this artificial barrier, to burst through all reserve, and to pour out their souls before their fellow-men, even at a Wesleyan class meeting. But for one man who can do this, there must be ten who cannot. For one man who can describe his religious experiences sincerely, naturally, usefully, both to himself and others, there must be ten who have very meagre religious experiences, who are tempted to invent fictions or colour facts. A certain gush of sympathetic enthusiasm must swell their week-day thoughts up to a sabbatarian high-water mark, and to many men must come with weakening results the Monday ebb. The minute peeping and prying into the nooks and crannies of one's soul, the balancing and pondering and discrimination of feelings and wishes, plans and actions, the thinking where to draw the line between decent reserve and insincere concealment, the describing one's temptations and one's consolations, one's failures and successes, the dread of saying nothing since the rest of the class all say something, the wish to say something correct and the fear of saying anything singular—all these complex motives must have a tendency sometimes to set the machinery of a young mind at work in a way not pleasant to imagine. What then must be the inherent vigour of a system

which, spite of these evident defects, produces such immense results?

There is no sufficient reason why this system, without its defects, should not be adopted by the Church of England. It is true there is a difference between the classes in which Methodism and those in which Anglicanism predominates. For the "genteel religious" Wesley had a great abhorrence. There is more reserve in them, less sociability than in the poorer classes. But after all, rich and poor are not of a different nature, nor have they received so different a training as to render it probable that a system which has produced very important results with one class should not produce at least considerable results with another. The defects need not be adopted. It is possible to devise a natural and noble cause for the habitual meeting of nine men without converting them into a mutual insurance society for spiritual purposes. Spite of all our reforms, and spite of all our aspirations, it is probable that the poor, the ill-educated, and the unfortunate will, for some time longer, require the sympathy and assistance of their fellow-men. To assist the poor, to report the results of periodic visiting, to consider those results and devise means for increasing or improving them, to encourage one another in apparent failure, and to deliberate upon the steps necessary for future success—these are sufficient reasons to induce nine men to meet together. In such a society there will be many subjects of practical interest which would continually and naturally arise. Not merely the state of the poor of the district, but the condition of the schools, the congregational worship, and the district in general, would furnish abundant material

for discussion. Beside these subjects, there would be others of a broader nature and more general interest, which would certainly suggest themselves to the members of a national Christian Church, if once that Church regained a vigorous conscience and intellect. At present we are miserably diffident in the powers of man and of the Christian co-operative spirit. Christianity was given us by the Divine Healer to create and preserve health,—mental, moral, physical, individual, national,—not to keep sickness half alive. But this is nearly all we have been doing for eighteen centuries with our Christianity—keeping sickness half alive. Like the Athenians in their wars of old, we need the advice of the great orator in our war against evil:*—"If even now you will but give up these habits and march out to battle and to action as beseems you, if you will but use these home resources as means for external conquests, then perhaps you may gain a great and crowning conquest, then perhaps you may be quit of such driblets of success as these, which are like the sops prescribed to their patients by physicians, for they will not give the sick men strength and yet will not let them die. And just so these present advantages of yours are not of a nature to bring permanent profit, and yet will not let you despair and turn elsewhere." The Church has been willing enough to relieve distress in every shape with continual "sops" of charity; but to prevent distress, to inquire into the causes of distress, to forward material and moral welfare, to inquire into the causes of such welfare, the Church has never consciously undertaken. This is left to the press and to the political economists; and the press

* Demosthenes' Third Olynthiac.

does it fairly from its point of view, and is indirectly sometimes (when represented by such papers as the *Spectator*, for example) more Christian than the Church. But if the present Church is to play the same part in the nineteenth century that Christ's freshly-founded Church played in the first, it must no longer neglect its duty.

Such meetings as I have described would naturally be preceded and concluded by prayer. If any of the number were burdened with doubts or difficulties of any kind, and felt himself strongly impelled to impart his difficulties in the hope of obtaining a solution of them, the very atmosphere of such a meeting would breed opportunities.

In such a state of things it would be impossible that there should exist many John Nelsons in the Church of England. John Nelson was a seeker after religious truth, who had sought and despaired. "He had now tried," he says, "all but the Jews, and thought it was to no purpose to go to them; so he determined to keep to the Church (of England) and read and pray whether he perished or not." Southey's comment on this is worth quoting:—"A judicious minister, who should have known the man, might have given him the comfort that he sought;—but the sort of intercourse between the pastor and people which this would imply hardly exists anywhere in England, and cannot possibly exist in the metropolis where Nelson was then residing." Not less worth quoting is Coleridge's note upon Southey:—"Is this true? And can the Church of which it is true be a Church of Christ?" Most men will agree with Southey, that to a terrible extent it is true, and with Coleridge,

that "a Church of which it is true cannot be a Church of Christ."

Further details of the manner in which these meetings should be conducted, and the results that might be expected from them, need not be discussed here. It is sufficient to observe that the spirit of sociality, thus developed in smaller sections of the congregation, could not rest till it had generated a demand for larger meetings of the whole congregation, to discuss in a more authoritative manner the same subjects as were discussed in smaller meetings. It would perhaps be found that besides a room for the purpose of public worship, other rooms, appropriate for formal and informal meetings, assembly-rooms, reading-rooms, and the like, were necessary parts of every building that claimed the name of church.

I am not sure that the congregational meetings, properly so called, would not more naturally precede than follow, generate than be generated by, the smaller meetings of the sections; such meetings of the whole congregation, if convened for a good end and well organized, would certainly be of paramount importance. It may be indeed objected that, not being recognised by the law on which the Church of England is founded, they could have no legal power to decide on any question; so that their discussions would be the mere expressions of a debating society, void of all authority. On the other hand, it may be objected that such meetings would be not too powerless, but too powerful, and would bring us to the level of the Dissenters. "You are confusing," it may be said, "two distinct things together; the Church system is one thing, the Dissenting system is another,—you may belong to either, you cannot belong to both; the system

above described cannot work with the parochial system of the Church of England. With the Dissenters it does work, but works in such a way that we Churchmen would not desire to change with them." There does not appear to be any insuperable difficulty in either of these opposite objections. On the one hand, those who have studied the history of popular assemblies know well that though they may begin by exercising little more than moral influence, they often (if they are really entitled to power by the right of the worthiest) end by making that moral influence a material influence, and converting right into might. There is no fear that such assemblies, if held periodically for a few years, would have too little power.

I admit that the other objection has far more force. There is a probability that such assemblies, becoming general through the kingdom, might find it easy to do what now seems hard—to change the system of patronage. That probability need not perhaps be regarded as a danger. But there is also a possibility that the system of patronage might be so changed as to make the clergy elective by their several congregations,—and that possibility may reasonably be regarded with considerable apprehension. But I would urge that at all events we shall start on our new system without the Dissenting method of electing ministers. The minister would, at first at all events, not be chosen by the congregation. The government of each congregation in the National Church would certainly cease to be, what it now is, a clerical autocracy tempered by lay indifference, but it would not at once begin to be, as it is among the Dissenters, a democracy—it would at all events start with a constitutional monarchy.

If however we should be reduced from a constitutional monarchy to a republic with an elective president, it may be fairly assumed that many of the evils now apparent in the Dissenting system, as it exists in sectarian forms, might be removed under the broader and more liberal influence of a National Church. And if it should happen in the course of years that the nation took the national patronage into its own hands and even adopted—as I trust it may never adopt—the method of congregational election, whose fault would that have been, or rather from what cause would such an effect have sprung? Would it not have been the fault, if fault at all, of the clergy, who had not been able to convince their people that effective ministers could be trained without the spur of competition or the applause of the congregational hustings; who had not been able, or had not been willing, to raise themselves with the rising standard of the age, and consequently, in the free intercourse of a popular assembly, had found it impossible to maintain the position which was at first conceded to them as their right? If the legal power were thus transferred, what would be the cause of the transference? Would it not be that the moral and actual power had already passed away, and the legal power only followed in their train? All government, at least all living government, is subject to such changes. Power passes from the hands of a monarch to an oligarchy, from an oligarchy to an aristocracy, from an aristocracy to a people. Is that a reason why a government should be dead and not living?

If the clergy proved worthy of their power, their

power under the new system would remain, increased by indefinite opportunities of direct and indirect influence; if they proved unworthy, their power would be curtailed, and some of it transferred to the laity. The clergy might possibly rise instead of sinking relatively to other classes: but, whether they rose or fell, the whole nation, and the clergy with the nation, would certainly be raised above their present level. And in any case that system of government, whether in Church or State, must be regarded as the best, which is best calculated by slow degrees to transfer from time to time the power in Church or State from the hands of the less worthy to the worthier.

Another objection remains to be considered. It may be said that "such congregational meetings would fail to represent the congregation. On any question of interest likely to cause difference of opinion, the meeting would be invaded by residents in the district who, though not in the habit of attending the Church, would overbear the opposition of the legitimate members of the congregation, strictly so called. Even among the members themselves dissensions and bickerings would continually arise."

So vivid an interest in Church politics would be certainly a novel phenomenon, hitherto mostly manifested by the laity only with respect to the nature of clerical dresses or ritual operations, the position of an organ, the height of pews, perhaps we may add the length of sermons, and other similar subjects which they feel to be both intelligible and interesting. Still, it must be admitted that such dissensions might, probably would, sometimes occur; as they occur in, and are considered a

necessary part of, our political government. The new Church would have its storms,—but storms are better than stagnation, and clear the air. Besides, when it is remembered that such congregational assemblies have no legal, only a moral power, it is at once evident that an immoral attempt of outsiders to regulate a system from which they voluntarily exclude themselves, would defeat itself. It would be easy in such cases to distinguish between the members and non-members of the congregation; and when the necessary deduction had been made, the moral weight of the opinion of the members of the congregation would still be the same. Not that it would be desirable to leave out of account altogether the expression of the opinion of non-members, still less to exclude them from the meeting. On the contrary, their attendance ought to be encouraged and their opinion sought; and only in the comparatively few points directly concerning the members, and indirectly or not at all concerning the non-members, ought their opinion to be disregarded.

It can hardly be but that those clergymen, who are in charge of large parishes and crowded districts, losing rather than gaining ground, working as hard as they can and harder than they should, yet still finding the work they are doing fall short of the work that needs doing, would welcome a change which would give them an organized and sufficient army for actively assailing evil. Unless a man is, or fancies that he is, "endued with all moral, mental, physical and intellectual advantages," he cannot be impervious to the argument that parochial work, consisting of very various departments, requires various agents, if it is to be done effectively. Even if a

young curate should imagine for the first year or two that he is capable of preaching, ministering, teaching, exhorting, giving and ruling* with effect, and he singly with more effect than any number of members of his congregation together, yet even he perhaps would not be wholly inaccessible to the persuasive influence of his recent cricketing experiences which must have convinced him that though the captain in the cricket-field may be able to field, bowl, and bat better than any of his eleven, yet if he takes upon himself to play all the game, the game will go against him.

To some it may seem sufficient to call this system congregationalism. It is at all events a congregationalism that has never been tried in the circumstances, or anything like the circumstances, advocated here. And certainly it seems to me more hopeful to attempt to revolutionize mankind by congregations which represent men as they are and belief as it is, than by convocations which represent men as they were and belief as it was; and it seems more natural to begin by first training individuals to think and act together,—that is, by creating a Church and conscience which shall require representation,—than to create a church-parliament which represents nothing, in order afterwards to deduce from it the Church which it ought to represent. That which constitutes a church is that which constitutes a state—men. It is beginning at the wrong end to elaborate a central ecclesiastical council till you have your men. First make your men—the Church will come of itself. But men cannot be made what they ought to be in spiritual isolation and inaction; and so far as a con-

* Epistle to the Romans, chap. xii.

gregation can afford opportunities for common action and the free interchange of thought, so far will it aid men to become what they ought to be.

Under such a system, call it by what name you will, the Church would be identified with the State. As the State changed, so would the Church change, and there would be as much fear of Church reform as there is of State reform,—as much, but no more. Church reform would simply mean the nation modifying its expression of spiritual truths or its ecclesiastical arrangements. Could we, under such a system, have come to the dead-lock at which we now are, reading a Bible that is called the written Word of God, and yet has not such reverence as is paid to the works of Plato in being intelligibly and accurately translated up to the scholarship of the present day, repeating prayers which to the less educated classes are unnatural and sometimes meaningless, catechizing in theory, excommunicating in theory, levying Church rates in theory, electing bishops in theory, christianizing everybody and everything in theory, but in practice letting half the men of England go whither they will? Many of these customs that have fallen into disuse may have been abuses; but abuses disused in practice ought to be abolished in theory, for every variation between theory and practice tends to generate uncertainty or disbelief, especially in matters pertaining to religion.

But the National Church, with the contention of its parties and the indifference of the State, is like a falling house, requiring repairs, but tenanted by wrangling lodgers and deserted by its true owner, who has moved into a wider and more roomy habitation where he can

breathe more freely. Each lodger is ready to repair the building, but only on the inside, and in such a manner as will enlarge his own apartments to the exclusion or inconvenience of all his fellow-lodgers; and all unanimously, with the insignificant exception of the last-comer,—a well-read and thoughtful, but feeble and unpractical person, who cannot make himself heard,—protest against any enlargement of the building itself, or against its being rebuilt on a broader foundation. The once interested owner has now become a comparatively indifferent landlord; he is half afraid of his lodgers, and more than half afraid that the building is too far gone to be repaired, and must soon fall to pieces of itself; and between the landlord who will do nothing, and the tenants who will have nothing done worth doing, what is to become of the building?

In the face of all these evils, since we cannot be much worse off than we are, it is not a sufficient condemnation of a remedy that you can give it a bad name. Nor is it a sufficient answer for two or three persons to urge that they have tried it, and found it a failure. It may not be easy at first to rouse the English laity out of the spiritual indolence which has been rendered a second nature by centuries of tradition. It cannot be effected by a single sermon. A public meeting of the congregation in an unconsecrated building would probably be far more effectual, because more natural and more fertile in opportunities for the expression of the congregational opinion. There will be need of much sympathy, judgment, tact, and self-abnegation, combined with firmness and method, on the part of the minister. It is possible that those who have tried and failed may not

have displayed these useful qualities. In that case, we may fairly request them to try again; or it is even possible that they may not possess these qualities at all. In that case we must request them to leave the experiment to be tried by those who do possess them, and not, by the ostentatious parade of their own easily explicable failure, to retard the success which is certainly reserved for others.

Let any incumbent in a crowded district who finds his work too much for him and requires help, but is unwilling to commit himself to a novel and decried system, take the opportunity presented by some temporary occasion to call his congregation together for some definite object—building a church or a school, erecting a gymnasium, collecting a library, making changes in the service, anything whatever—and let him, if possible, imbue them with the belief that, if the work is to be done, they must all do it together. Let him continue these meetings periodically for a time; let him endeavour to form smaller meetings among the congregation for the definite object in view; let him encourage, both at the smaller and at the larger meetings, the discussion of all matters connected with the welfare of the congregation and the Church; let him notice whether there be not developed by such co-operation an enthusiam, zeal, and unselfishness, which no sermons of his could ever have awakened. And if he finds it is so, is it too much to ask him to consider whether a system that proved valuable when recognised as temporary contains anything essential which would prevent it from being valuable when recognised as permanent?

But we are met by the cry of the division of labour.

"Men of business have no time," it is said, "to visit the poor, to teach in the schools, or in fact to take any part in parochial work. They have worked hard during the day, and must rest during the evening; parochial work must be left to the clergy, whose business it is." This principle of the division of labour may be carried too far. A system which allots nothing but brain-work to some men, and nothing but heart-work to others, is unsatisfactory. A man who says, "I have no time to read anything but the newspapers, I have no time to see my children, much less to look after their education; I have no time to amuse myself, I have no time to pity, I have no time to sympathise; I have only time to dine, sleep, and make money," is, if he is struggling to keep his family out of the workhouse, to be pitied; otherwise, to be blamed. The division of labour is an excellent device for producing the objects of labour in abundance and with ease, but it is not always excellent for the labourers themselves. Twenty men are required to produce a pin. Good for the production of pins, not good for the making of men. Better, as far as the man is concerned, that he should mis-shape some twelve bungling attempts at pins in the course of the day's twelve hours, than that, in company with nineteen others, he should make twelve thousand faultless twentieth parts of pins.

These disadvantages in the division of labour are, or ought to be, compensated by the increased leisure afforded to every man, which he can spend in supplying the deficiencies caused, or at all events not supplied, by his daily labour. Now, making money, though it may be a far more intellectual operation than the construction of the twentieth part of a pin, nevertheless does

not always give much play to the sympathetic faculties. It may exercise the brain—it sometimes does not exercise the heart. Hence it follows that a man who is much occupied in making money by means of brain-work ought to find time (on Sundays if not on week-days) for the exercise of those faculties of the heart which the routine of his work leaves unexercised. No doubt family life is to some extent a remedy, but it is not a sufficient remedy. Some people advocate culture as the true remedy. But self-culture when thus used, as it is used, to denote culture for self's sake, reminds one of an athlete training before a looking-glass for the sole purpose of exulting in the development of his muscles. Such "culture" is vulgar, and cannot produce other than vulgar results. The best culture is found in co-operation for a common object, or in the preparation which such co-operation requires.

It is not fair to the laity that they should be encouraged in the belief that all that is required of them by the division of labour is to make money, to provide for their families, to give spare money to the poor, and leave the rest to the clergy. This ought not to be the whole duty of man, at least of an Englishman of the middle-class, in the nineteenth century. But if indeed the principle of the division of labour is to be carried out, carry it out fairly and divide the labour impartially. The clergy in large towns have more than their share of labour. Multiply the number of the clergy in the metropolis by ten, or by twenty: but if the laity are not prepared to do this, let them take upon themselves a part of the labour of the clergy.

Then a congregation would be a congregation indeed,

or rather something more; not a mere meeting of confused sheep bleating together in more or less of discord, incapable of anything else but bleating, but a pack of well-trained hounds hunting in unison, and accustomed to work and move together; and the minister as he rose in his pulpit would survey, not a mere medley of individuals, some requiring one kind of instruction, some another, but an army drilled in small detachments and in large, conscious of one purpose, assembled to encourage one another and to be encouraged in that purpose. He himself, if he were anything of a man, could hardly fail to be infected by the same practical spirit; and, instead of speaking truths that he had read about, or truths that he had thought about, or truths that he knew other men once knew, or truths that he knew he ought to know, he would speak the truths he did know. And even though he were an inferior man, as might sometimes happen, and knew little spiritual truth, yet to an assembly so constituted, so prepared, the slightest spark of truth would be sufficient to fire all.

Such a congregation would realize the noble description of St. Paul, "many members making one body." And if all the members were active, no member would be overburdened. Some men have a rare gift of sympathy, such men (and among the poor we should find many such) could visit the poor; some men can impart knowledge clearly and forcibly, such men should teach at the night schools and Sunday schools; some men have a clear head and business habits, such men should manage the relief and other funds of the congregation; some men have original intuition of divine truth, such men should preside at the smaller meetings of the

congregation; some men have taste, such men should regulate the services of the congregation; some men have much special knowledge and the power of communicating it, such men should give lectures in the various institutions of the district for the benefit not merely of the poor, but of the congregation in general; some men have a faculty of practical organization, such men should endeavour to put into practice plans that may be devised by others for the good of the district; some men have a knowledge of past history, and of the past and present needs and requirements of human nature, which makes them see more clearly than others what ought to be and what ought not to be the customs of a Christian district and a Christian country,—such men should propose theories and devise plans for others to put in practice; all men have their experience, mental, moral, material; all men can attend, and feel an interest in, and derive comfort from, the deliberations for the common welfare, and almost all can occasionally contribute something from their particular experience to the common good. There would be no want of work, no superfluity of workers. For the congregation would not be then, as it is now, a mere formal prayer meeting, diversified at times by the celebration of the Sacraments, but the centre of light and life in each district, the source of all philanthropic activity, the rallying-point of all reformers and improvers; some reform would be continually suggesting itself requiring the deliberation and co-operation of the whole congregation, and tasking the activity of many of the individual members. We should thus combine the co-operation of the Greek "polity" with the unselfishness of the Christian spirit, and the result would

be Christian earnestness combined with Greek culture; and as the Greeks expected their able-bodied men to serve in arms, so we Christians should call upon all men who are not incapacitated by the want of ordinary intelligence, to take part in Christian warfare against evil. And as for the man who is thus incapacitated, as for the creature who has no taste, no sympathy, no knowledge, no intuition, no experience, no intellect—let him, if there be such a man, content himself with doing that which we now think the one thing needful—giving money. But unless a man can confess that he has none of the faculties and none of the virtues of humanity, let him not claim exemption from humanity's duties.

Then and then only would the nation and the national policy be effectually christianized, and a national conscience awakened into vigorous action. Let us take an example. Suppose we had been in the habit forty years ago of meeting together continually in the manner above described, at the time when the question of slavery was being discussed in England, is it not likely that in one out of so many of such assemblies convened for Christian objects, conducted in a Christian spirit, even the first diffident whisper of condemnation, uttered perhaps by a single member, would have been listened to, and welcomed, and caught up, and repeated as the voice of the whole congregation, and then, gathering volume as it went, the increasing cry would have passed on from district to district, re-echoing throughout the length and breadth of the land, till, in a few weeks, the popular mind would have been made up, and the popular verdict proclaimed in tones so loud, and with a meaning

so unmistakeable, that the most shifty temporizer who ever arrogated to himself the name of statesman could temporize and compromise no longer? And can any man fail to see that, at the present time, not merely Factory Acts, Education Bills, and measures that concern this country alone, but our foreign policy also, would by such a Christian machinery be effectually christianized? And is it not better that such measures should be authoritatively discussed at Christian unions, where the common good is at least the professed object, than at trades-unions, where the confessed object is the good of a particular class?

Then too, and then only, would our middle-classes be properly educated. It has been said by Mr. Lowe * that during the passing of the late Reform Bill, "every man was thinking too much of his own business, of his own affairs, of his till and his counting-house, and too little of the great affairs going on around him," to be sufficiently active in defending the political interests of his class, and that consequently their power has been taken from them, and "the curious thing is that it was taken from them without a remonstrance on their part." It would seem not to have occurred to the speaker that it ought not to seem "curious" if some at all events of the middle-class were not inclined to remonstrate in defence of a power which they felt they were not entitled exclusively to retain. Yet it must be admitted that, as regards the majority of the middle-class, there is some truth in the accusation. But the remedy does not lie merely in improved middle-class education for boys (though that is capable of great improvement), but also

* *Times*, 24th January.

in improved middle-class education for men. Now there is no education for men like co-operation, and that is the highest form of education which enables men to co-operate for the noblest end in the most diverse manners. And any class of the nation that has meetings for co-operation, whether clubs or trades-unions or Christian-unions, will always be superior to a class that has none, both in true culture and in action. Union even for self-regarding purposes is always more powerful, and almost always more educational than disunion without any purpose, or even with a good purpose.

It may be said there is something too artificial in this system. There is a large number of very worthy men,—thoughtful many of them,—to whom the very word "system" is maddening. Yet surely it is not system, but unnatural system, that calls for dislike. Does the system stated above deserve the charge of unnaturalness? Is it natural for men to live in a state in which, upon subjects of the greatest importance, they have no intercourse with their neighbours? About art, literature, and science men converse freely, and in consequence they improve one another both in taste and knowledge; about religion no one, except a preacher, has power to breathe a word in society, and consequently there is little religious instinct and little religious knowledge in the nation. With respect to the politics of the nation there is free discussion and intercourse, on Sundays as well as week days; but with respect to the national religion there is scarcely any intercourse at all, even on the Sunday which is specially devoted to it; and such intercourse as exists among the very religious is almost confined to the household and the home. Every man's

religion is considered a matter for his own soul, or includes at most his wife and children. In that sense, indeed, an Englishman's house is his castle. For as far as regards religious intercourse we dwell in fortified isolation, like the Cyclops on their inaccessible heights, "with no assemblies to take counsel withal, nor laws, but dwelling on the tops of lofty mountains—

θεμιστεύει δὲ ἕκαστος
παίδων ἠδ' ἀλόχων οὐδ' ἀλλήλων ἀλέγουσι."

Is this natural except for a nation of spiritual monsters? Is this the outcome of Christianity, and of reformed Christianity? I grant that social religion, like charity, must begin at home; but must it end there? I wonder greatly that more is not said by preachers on the necessity of making the family a congregation, on the necessity of family prayers and family worship. But that is not enough. A father of a family is also member of a Church. As a member of a Church he has wants which must be satisfied, natural desires which must be fulfilled. If the congregation does not aid in fulfilling them, though it may be all that we think it ought to be, it is not what it was meant to be by Christ. To say that Christianity ought to flourish without intercourse is to say that life ought to exist without food, or health without ventilation. What if isolation and reserve have by their long duration become a second nature. Is that a reason against—is it not a reason for—adopting what is really natural?

But indeed every one admits that in all things union among men is natural. The great cry of the age is for more union, more co-operation; and the great danger of the age is that union and co-operation will base themselves on self-interest. Should that be the case, the same

"vulgarity" that appears in the Wesleyan classes will make itself manifest in the results of trades-unions and co-operative societies. "To save one's soul" or "to make money" cannot be the highest motives possible for human nature; and the society which adopts either motto adopts at the same time the elements of destruction. It is therefore needful that now, if ever, while the necessity for union is recognised, the basis of union should be recognised as well. At present, those who admit the need of union are ignorant of the true basis of union; and those who are disposed by their education to assent to the proposition that the fulfilment of the golden law of Christ is the only legitimate basis of permanent union are utterly blind to the fact that the union about which they theorize has no existence, and can have no existence, till the present artificial restrictions of society are removed. The people are not drifting from the National Church because they are less religious than they were, but because they are more religious. They must have union at any price, and the Church of England knows only compromise, not union. It is not a mere desire to make money, or to increase leisure, that originates even trades-unions. There is among many of the members a strong sense that they are making sacrifice for a common end; and such a spirit is the breath of life which would protect their existence long after they had become engines for political and social tyranny. But in such societies there is a sectarian vulgarity, only one degree removed from the vulgarity of Wesleyan classes. The selfishness of the Wesleyan is individual; he "makes companions to save his soul." The selfishness of the trades-union is class-selfishness. It divides mankind into two distinct

classes,—those who are members of a particular society and those who are not,—and to the latter class, the great majority of mankind, the universe *minus* one particular trades-union, it says: "Stand afar off; we have nothing to do with you; we are brothers to one another, to the rest of the world mere strangers: we will make sacrifices for our class, and enforce the rights of our class; but for men outside our class we recognise no rights, we will make no sacrifices."

Such union cannot regenerate the world. The divine laws of nature in their courses fight against it; the river of progress will sweep it away—that ancient, never-ending river. The enemies of progress will perish. But wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of love there will be found a spirit of love in the midst of men, which will be with them always, even to the end of the world.

IV.

THE CHURCH AND THE EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE.

The system of elementary education in England is plainly about to undergo a certain measure of transformation. It has hitherto been a voluntary system subsidized by the State; it will henceforth be a State system, independent of, but quite willing to utilize, voluntary zeal and liberality. The private bounty, which has been the motive-power hitherto, has of course been mainly, or rather almost solely, religious; naturally, therefore, the administration of the system has fallen all but entirely into clerical hands. The clergy, as a body, have never loved their inevitable alliance with the State. Under a clerical instinct, which has been operative about equally in all denominations, they have yearned for the sole control of popular education. It was only by dire necessity that the money of the State has been forced on them; they would have refused it if they could, for they knew that the acceptance would involve State interference and control. As the subsidies of the State increased, and the claims of the State to a larger share in the administration, as a natural consequence, increased simultaneously, the clergy resisted the gradual encroachment with steady stubbornness, and at times with a

certain measure of success. But the course of events has been too strong for them. The Committee of Council on Education, when transformed, as in a year or two it probably will be, into a department of State, presided over by a Minister of Education, will be master of the situation to a far greater extent than ever before. The so-called "National Society," which has fought the battle of the clergy against "My Lords" so steadily, and upon the whole so ably, will soon be a useless (or possibly a mischievous) anachronism for any purpose but that of supplying excellent school material at a cheap rate to the parochial clergy. The period of "voluntary contributions" is drawing to a close, and that of school-rates on the eve of commencement. In a word, the voluntary system is moribund, the state system is nascent. The clergy knew that they were essential to the former; they are already asking, with many searchings of heart, whether the latter is not only too likely to resent their interference and dispense with their services.

Though a clergyman, I should not be the editor of the present volume if my thoughts ran altogether in the common clerical groove. Nevertheless, in the arguments which I am about to offer, I may be more biassed in favour of my order than I fancy. Were I a layman, however, I do not think I should be any the less earnest in pleading for the clergy as large a share as ever in the education of the people; in pleading with the clergy not to forfeit one of their noblest functions in disgust at much that must be bitterly unpalatable to many of them in the new order of things.

Let me briefly state how the account stands between the Church and the nation in this matter. The epoch of

popular education in England dates from 1796, when the young Quaker, Joseph Lancaster, opened a day-school for poor children in his father's house at Southwark. Perplexed what to do with the numbers that flocked to him, he devised the "mutual," or "monitorial," system of instruction. His experiments attracted great attention and favour, chiefly, of course, among the Nonconformists; and one main result was the foundation in 1808 of the British and Foreign School Society. The Church, put on her mettle, found the man she wanted in the Rev. Dr. Bell, who appeared in England in 1797, eager to promote a monitorial system very similar to Lancaster's, which he had invented in India for the benefit of the Military Orphan School at Madras. The friends of Lancaster had founded their Society on an unsectarian basis, with the Bible, "without note or comment," for the only religious school-book. In 1811 the Church party founded the "National Society," in rivalry, to "promote the education of the poor in the principles of the Established Church." From that time till 1833 popular education was left entirely to the religious bodies, and they acted chiefly through these two Societies. The results they achieved it is difficult to gauge now, but unquestionably they were notable. Some not very trustworthy statistics obtained in 1818 showed that the proportion of day-scholars to the population was one in 17·25; fifteen years later some equally unsatisfactory returns indicated that the proportion had risen to one in 11·27. Probably the education given was not worth much. Nevertheless, what voluntary zeal had done without any aid from the State was, after all deductions, very considerable; and the zeal was chiefly the zeal of the Church clergy. The

younger Society outgrew its rival in wealth and influence, and among the newly-built schools the "National" greatly outnumbered the "British."

In 1833 the first government aid was given, the slender pittance of 20,000*l.* being divided between the two Societies,—the "National," of course, obtaining the lion's share.* This arrangement was continued year by year till 1839, when the Committee of Council on Education was formed. By this measure, and by the larger annual grants which were now dispensed, a great stimulus was given to the creation of elementary schools. As the Committee only gave to augment funds locally raised, the main burden was, as before, thrown on voluntary zeal, and it was still in the Church that the zeal was most vigorous. Out of 500,000*l.* granted between 1839 and 1850, 405,000*l.* was allotted to Church schools—a fact which implies an expenditure of probably not less than a million and a half on the part of the clergy and their friends within the decade. The share of all the other religious bodies during the same period was only 58,000*l.*, the balance, 37,000*l.*, having gone to the workhouse schools. Nor has the Church expenditure on education diminished since 1850—it has rather increased. In 1861 the Duke of Newcastle's Commission reported that the Church schools contained 76·2 per cent. of all the scholars in week-day schools. The parsons are raising at this time an income, for the education of the poor, of more than half a million—to say nothing of the time and labour they are giving week by week to eke out the overtasked energies

* In the five years 1834—1838, the grants made through the National Society amounted to 69,710*l.*, through the British and Foreign School Society to 35,285*l.*

of the stipendiary teachers. In fact, the nation owes its present system of elementary education mainly to the clergy: but for them two-thirds of the national schools would not be in existence. If they were to organize a combined strike against the Committee of Council, half the schools in the country would be closed within a twelvemonth.

And there is yet another feature in the case on behalf of the clergy to which due weight ought to be given. It was under the stimulus and at the instigation of the State that the clergy undertook this task and made these sacrifices. The Church awoke to a sense of her duty in the matter of education half a century ago; the nation at large is only just awakening now. Now at last the country is ripe, or almost ripe, for a scheme of education based on local taxation, but thirty years ago the British ratepayer would not have parted with half a farthing in the pound for such a purpose. An Education Bill, with a school-rate for its backbone, would have been laughed out of the House of Commons. This was seen clearly enough in 1839. It was seen that religious zeal—that is, for the most part, the zeal of the Church clergy—was the only motive-power as yet in existence strong enough to drive the educational machine. It was to the clergy, therefore, that the statesmen of the day made their virtual appeal,—and, as I have shown, they answered that appeal magnificently.

The clergy then have only to call to witness the educational history of England during the last half century to establish their claim to—I will not say generous, but—just forbearance whenever the new system is brought into operation. Nor is there, I believe, the slightest

indisposition on the part of the country to allow their claim. I constantly meet with the frankest acknowledgments of it both in the liberal and nonconformist press. There is always an abundant expression of gratitude to them on either side of the House in debates on education. At the recent Conference in Manchester, though the anti-clerical element was in the ascendant, every reference to the great services of the clergy was received with ready cheers. It is only a clique of half-bred Liberals, afflicted, like Mr. Lowe, with clericophobia, who desire to humiliate the clergy and oust them from their place in the education of the people.

But, along with this readiness to concede their just claims, there is also a very widespread conviction that they are both too autocratic and too anxious about "the interests of the Church" in their administration of the national schools; and that, therefore, they need watching and controlling. And for these anti-clerical sentiments the clergy have chiefly themselves to blame. From the first foundation of the National Society, they—or rather the leaders they have suffered to speak in their name—have put forward the highest pretensions, as though they had a divine right to teach the people; they have tried (not nearly so much as is commonly supposed, and with absolutely no success) to make the school a political outwork in the war of Toryism against Liberalism; they have sometimes made an ungenerous use of their monopoly of education, and sought to employ it (to use Archdeacon Denison's language) as a missionary agency among the Dissenters; and they have driven a hard bargain with the State, and demanded that the system should be denominational (that is, unnational),

as the price of their services. In their jealousy, they have again and again thwarted the wider and wiser policy of statesmen. In 1839 they prevented the establishment of a normal school; in 1846 they resisted to the uttermost the "Management Clauses" which associated with them, in their hitherto sole management of the schools, committees of subscribing laymen; of late years they have clamoured vociferously against the "Conscience Clause." Sir James Kay Shuttleworth might describe the years during which he was the virtual Minister of Education as a continuous fighting with the clergy, and Mr. Lingen would repeat the tale.

The country, while remembering with due gratitude the services of the clergy, remembers also these serious drawbacks. There is, therefore, except among the High Church laity, no strong enthusiasm on behalf of their claims, but simply a cool inclination to treat them fairly, at any rate, and generously, if possible. The average public opinion on the matter seems to be this:—There is no general desire to get rid of the present clerical rule and management, but rather the contrary. If, however, it is a fact that the present educational system is defective and inadequate, then the rapidly growing demand for a better system will not be perceptibly checked by any tenderness for clerical sensibilities.

That another system is urgently needed is a conviction which can no longer be resisted. The National Society has been very busy this last year in gathering statistics to prove that the educational destitution is not so bad as is represented. It has converted, or rather—as probably a year ago he had no opinions whatever on the subject—it has "educated" the Duke of Marlborough, who came

down last March to the House of Lords, primed with the Society's figures, to introduce a Government Bill for the perpetuation, after a little tinkering, of the present system. But the Ministry's educational "pill for earthquakes" will evidently fare no better than their Irish pill. The existing scheme is breaking down, and no daubing with untempered mortar will hold it together. The principle that the Committee of Council laid down thirty years ago, that their province was not to educate, but to stimulate and improve education, and that consequently they could make no grants except to augment, in a fixed proportion, funds locally raised, was the only principle possible at that day. If they had attempted to make grants wherever grants were wanted, they would have been wanted everywhere. But there was an obvious flaw in the principle. As the local funds could only be raised by voluntary contributions—that is to say, in comparatively wealthy neighbourhoods—those who wanted assistance most obtained least, and the poorest districts were left absolutely destitute. This flaw was tolerable because it was inevitable, and because the scheme was provisional. It is no longer tolerable now, for the country is prepared at last to substitute compulsory rates for voluntary subscriptions. The public would not be ready to undertake the new burden unless the necessity were real,—and no statistics supplied to order by the clerical party can any longer disguise the reality. There are hundreds of parishes still lacking schools, and likely, under the present *régime*, to lack them for a generation. As the wealthier districts have already got their schools, the grants for building might now be raised, as the Duke of Marlborough proposes, for the benefit of poor districts

still unprovided, and thus this particular want might be met by a lavish expenditure from the imperial purse. But the difficulty is, how to maintain the schools when provided. There are hundreds of districts in which the hard-driven clergy are sorely perplexed to keep their schools open, much less to keep them efficient. One very significant fact may be adduced in proof of this. The Revised Code, in the effort to check (as was necessary) the increasing expenditure from the imperial purse, cut down the grants 2*s.* 8*d.* per scholar. To partially meet this deficit the clergy contrived to extract elevenpence a head more from the parents, but they could only screw twopence-halfpenny additional from private bounty. No proof could be more convincing that the strain on the voluntary system has reached the utmost tension it can bear. It must not be forgotten, moreover, that one effect of raising the school-fees is to sift out the poorer children. In some places I believe that schools have actually been closed; and the only assistance which the Committee of Council is now capable of giving to school-managers struggling under their impecuniosities, is to fine them for falling short of the appointed standard. For this state of things there is no remedy on the voluntary system. The Committee of Council have for years steadily maintained, against all comers, that to relax the conditions on which grants are given—conditions which all resolve themselves into the single one that there shall be adequate local funds—would involve an expenditure so wasteful as to be ruinous to the system. The conclusion is irresistible: if the country will bear an educational rate, an educational rate there must be. It is useless for the clerical party to protest and resist. They

can neither gainsay facts, nor devise an alternative scheme.

I think it is desirable to analyse the reasons why the clergy abhor so heartily the prospect of school-rates. I question whether they themselves are quite conscious of their own motives. The ordinary parson has, of course, his reason cut and dry :—"Rates will lead to secular education." I am convinced myself that this is a libel on the ratepayers. They wish to retain the religious element in education; they will not forego it, except under compulsion, as the only way of putting an end to the wrangles of the denominational leaders. But I shrewdly suspect that this dread of secular instruction is not the real bugbear. The apprehension that a loss of control over education will involve a loss of power and prestige, exercises, I believe, a greater influence. No doubt the right to educate does give a large measure of both. That is why the priesthood has always striven to secure the privilege of teaching; that is why the Anglican clergy are now so strenuously resisting all encroachments on their monopoly at Oxford and Cambridge, and why the Ultramontane clergy are so busily intriguing to secure a charter for a Roman Catholic University in Ireland. But I question whether this is any great incentive in the case of elementary schools. Thirty or forty years ago, no doubt, the clergy were possessed with the notion that, if they could get the national schools into their hands, they could rescue the children of the poor from the wiles of nonconformity. But in the interval the illusion has been dispelled. If we take the attendance at Sunday-schools as the test, then it would appear that the Church has lost rather than gained ground

among the manual labour class. A far stronger motive, I am sure—it would be the grossest injustice to deny it—is the simple honest wish of almost every parish priest in the kingdom to promote the spiritual welfare of his young parishioners. But there is a stronger motive even than this behind. The clergy feel that to take their schools from them would be scarcely less than an act of confiscation. Their schools are even more their own than their churches. They are threatened in that tenderest of all sentiments—the sentiment of property. If Parliament were to compel them to associate with themselves a committee of lay-preachers in the use of their pulpits, it would hardly seem more unnatural than to have a committee of ratepayers imposed upon them in the management of their schools. Thirty years of monopoly has taught the rector to say "my school" with as full a feeling of possession as when he says "my rectory." The frequency with which the school has been built quite close to the rectory, often actually in the garden, is a sign—a really touching sign—of the prevalence of this feeling. "It is so nice," said a rector's wife once to me, "for John to have his school so close! He can pop in and out just as he pleases."

And very pleasant and paternal this arrangement has been, and very great and good have been the results. There has been, perhaps, a little too much curtseying and catechism in the Church schools; there has been a Tory savour about them which Dissenters and Liberals were not likely to approve; the religious teaching—especially in rural schools—has commonly been more "goody" in tone than was altogether wholesome, and it has frequently been little more than word-deep; and occasionally, but

rarely (for the practice of the clergy has been far more liberal than their profession), our formularies, and even attendance on our Sunday-schools and churches, have been forced on the children of recalcitrant parents. But these, I am convinced, are the only charges that can with justice be brought against the practical management of the parsons during the many years that they have had the elementary teaching of the English poor in their hands.

There is, after all, very little of the priest about the typical English parson. We are a class, but we have no wish to become a caste. As a class, our historical traditions and our position as the territorial clergy of an Established Church, make us lean to the Conservative party; our civil privileges and social prestige make us patronising and exclusive in our intercourse with our "nonconformist brethren"—(the reciprocal sentiments between us and them are very similar to those between the first and second "set" in a small country town)—and therefore our monopoly of education is unavoidably a grievance—mainly sentimental—to liberal politicians and dissenting ministers. But to have in every parish an educated gentleman ready to act as unpaid superintendent, with whom the efficiency of the school is a matter of honour and duty, for which on a pinch he will spare neither time nor money, is an advantage too enormous to be lightly foregone. If the clergy will only recollect that they are the ministers of a Church which, professing to be national, is bound to be comprehensive; if they will only duly consider that their right to retain the control of education will for the future rest on their readiness and capacity to offer an education which the great

majority of their countrymen will heartily accept—they may retain their position for centuries.

Judging by the past, the fear that they will be extruded seems to be greatly exaggerated. Their autocracy has been hardly, if at all, infringed on by the once famous, but now forgotten "Management Clauses," against which they fought so vehemently in 1847. In nine cases out of ten, if not ninety-nine out of a hundred, the subscribers' committees leave their clerical chairmen to do just as they please. Except in the case of large town schools, they rarely meet; I have known cases in which years have elapsed between two consecutive meetings. When a vacancy occurs no one, except possibly the incumbent himself, ever dreams of calling on the subscribers to fill it up. I question whether there are at this moment a hundred school committees in all England which have their full complement of members, while I suspect that there are many which the supineness of the subscribers has allowed to lapse into non-existence. The rector probably asks a couple of his friends if they will serve, telling them that they will have nothing to do but to sign some papers occasionally, which they commonly do without asking any questions. Some one, probably one of the churchwardens, once a year (just before the inspector comes) overhauls the accounts, and a few incumbents pay their subscribers the compliment of issuing an annual report. But for the most part the rector has it all his own way. If his way were flagrantly at variance with the opinions of his subscribers, or if he grossly neglected the school, the latent life of the committee would quickly warm into action. But though their existence is a potential, it is rarely an actual check on the clergy.

Now, I do not think that the clergy can look for an autocracy quite so complete as this after the introduction of school-rates. Nevertheless, if they will but bring themselves into harmony with the convictions and wishes of the nation as successfully as they have done with those of their own narrower public, their right to manage will be left almost intact.

It is not difficult to vaticinate the probable course of events. Some such bill as that now proposed by Messrs. Bruce and Forster will presently be carried. England will be divided into school districts for the purpose of levying education rates. These rates will be administered by district committees, which will have power to build schools where they are needed, and provide funds for the sustentation of both these and—if they will accept the grant—the existing schools. The action of the Committee of Privy Council (probably magnified into a department of State) will remain the same; though let us hope that the proved flaws of the Revised Code will be remedied. The district committees will not attempt directly to manage the schools within their borders. In the case of new schools built by them, they will appoint, I suppose, a management committee. In large towns it is not probable, and perhaps not desirable, that the clergyman should be a member, much less the chairman, of this committee; but it is to be hoped that in rural parishes the folly will not be committed of passing by the most obvious, and commonly by far the best man for the work. With regard to existing committees, the present proposal is to leave them as they are, even if they accept the money of the ratepayers. The district committee will ascertain by its own inspector that the

funds they supply are properly used, and his periodical visits will doubtless be a slight infringement on the sole sway of the incumbent. But with the internal discipline of the school he will not interfere. The connexion between the managers and the district committee will be scarcely more than financial.

This proposal to exempt the present managers from all interference was made, I believe, partly to conciliate the clergy, partly out of a sense of justice. Being so kindly it is a pity that it should be so futile. Under a state system the present method of management can hardly be retained. The voluntary subscribers cannot be exempted from the school-rate. The effort to exempt them will doubtless be made, yet you might as well propose to excuse a man his poor's-rate because he contributes to some charitable society. But no true Briton will pay both rates and subscriptions for the same purpose, and so the latter will cease. The school-rate will drive out the school-subscription as certainly as the Hanoverian drove out the old English rat; and along with subscribers the managers will also vanish of course. The *ex officio* members, *i.e.* the incumbent, his licensed curate, if he has one, and perhaps his churchwardens, will be left; but it is scarcely probable (though possible) that the ratepayers will leave them in possession. The ratepayers, I say, for they will now have succeeded to the practical power, the loss of his voluntary contributions having forced the incumbent into "union" with the district committee. Or perhaps the incumbent may cause a few of his friends to continue subscribers, in order to elect themselves managers. Such a device, however, for buying with a few annual guineas the right to manage the schools and

spend the rates would certainly be regarded with jealousy, and presently be set aside. By far the most probable issue is, that the clergyman will retain his chairmanship, but that a new set of managers will be associated with him. I greatly fear, I allow, that some few clergy will be dogged enough to resist to the utmost, and, using their legal rights (for their legal position will be a strong one), will retain full possession of the buildings, close them on the week-day, and only open them as Sunday-schools. But supposing the clergy accept the new managers, will they be as easy and amenable as their predecessors? It will depend on the clergy themselves. If they can and will adapt themselves to the new order of things, they are about to enter on a long new lease of power; if they cannot or will not, they may very possibly be ousted within a generation.

Much will depend on the constitution of the new management committees. Two interests should be, and I think will be, represented. It is a question whether the schools under the new *régime* are to be free. The decision ought to be in the negative. Some children no doubt must be admitted without payment, more especially if attendance is compulsory; and it will be a serious practical difficulty where and how to draw the line between the free scholars and the scholars that pay. But the difficulty ought to be overcome. Nearly half a million a year, now cheerfully paid in school fees, ought not lightly to be thrown away. If then the parents continue to pay fees for their children, their claim to have a voice in the management, whenever the new system comes into play, can scarcely be resisted. Possibly the claim may not be made at present, but when made it

will be irresistible. It must not be forgotten that these same parents, under the democracy which the Tories have prepared for us, will be our new masters. Their introduction to a share in the management will be for a time by no means an unalloyed good, and they will require careful restraint. Left to themselves they would soon spoil both the teaching and the discipline, and provoke a universal strike among masters and mistresses. Still a voice in the management is their natural right; to have it is an important point in their own education; and by degrees they will learn to use it with a tolerable share of wisdom. Their passive influence on their clerical chairman will be wholly good. To carry them with him he must broaden his religious teaching, and render the general character of the school more liberal. The manual labour class, beyond all denial, care very little about religious teaching; they have watched for years with the most stolid indifference the wrangle of the denominational leaders for the possession of their children; if there is a secular school within reach at which the instruction is either cheaper or better, they use it without the slightest compunction; if they have any feeling in the matter at all, it is nothing more than a sluggish dislike for catechisms. They may easily be brought to support simple, sensible, religious instruction; but if they move at all, they will certainly throw their weight against dogmas and formularies.

I do not think, however, that any attempt to dislodge the clergy will be made by the parents. Whether represented on the committees or not, their views and wishes will have to be considered far more than formerly, but with a little common sense and good feeling it will be

easy to conciliate them. With the managers, who, nominated by the district committees or otherwise appointed,* represent the ratepayers, there will be some risk and difficulty. There will generally be a nonconformist and anti-clerical element amongst them, and in many localities that element will be predominant. Not seldom the parson will have to receive a dissenting minister among his new associates. To predict many a bitter parish wrangle in the early years of school-rates is a very safe prophecy. The argument already heard against Mr. Bruce's Bill, that his scheme would generate disputes over school-rates as bad and as frequent as the old disputes over church-rates, is only too valid. Three-fourths of the elementary schools are in the hands of the clergy, yet only a half of the population are church people, and not a tithe of this half really care for our distinctive tenets. It is too much then to hope that the nonconformist ratepayers will consent to pay their school-rates to the leaders of the ascendant denomination, unless those leaders are wise enough to satisfy their not unreasonable wishes. If once a strong anti-church-school-rate agitation arises, the Householder Parliament will be very likely to set aside the trust deeds which now give the clergy the sole control over the religious instruction. It is to be feared that both Parliament and ratepayers will receive ample provocation. There are bigoted clergymen who will fight to maintain the "strictly Church" character of their schools unmodified, and who

* A friend makes a good practical suggestion,—That they should be elected by the Easter vestries. It would be better that they should only fill up vacancies, not annually elect. Of course it follows that all the school ratepayers must have access to the vestries. There would be some difficulty in the case of district churches, where the seat-holders constitute the vestry.

will have to be coerced into common sense by the withdrawal of grants. There are ill-bred clergymen who will be rude to the dissenting ministers and their adherents, and so kindle personal animosities against themselves which will be vented on their schools. But (unless I rate my order too highly) the great majority of us have the instincts of gentlemen and an average share of sober English sense. After a little soreness on the one side, and a little jealousy on the other, we shall, I think, work ourselves into harmony with our committees, and reap our reward in the recovery of our old autocracy scarcely diminished.

Of course I neither expect, nor wish, that this end should be attained merely by the personal kindliness and tact of the clergy. To retain their control over elementary education they may have to submit to a very considerable modification in the religious part of it. If the schools henceforth are to be mainly maintained by school-rates, they must gradually put off their denominational character.

The adoption of a Conscience Clause must obviously be the first condition of aid from the local purse. That ratepayers will consent to pay taxes for the support of schools to which they cannot send their own children without rendering them liable to the inculcation of dogmas from which they themselves dissent, is not to be dreamt of for a moment. The limitation of the Conscience Clause hitherto to the case of isolated schools in rural districts has been an injustice to the dissenters. Though there may be other schools in a populous district, yet probably the Church school is by far the best. If then an illiberal country parson is to be prohibited from

inflicting the penalties of no education on the nonconformist urchin who will not submit to his missionary efforts, it is scarcely less obvious that his town brother ought also to be stopped from inflicting the lesser penalty of inferior education.

But though excellent as a compromise, and excellent, too, as a stepping-stone to a better system, it is impossible to rest and be satisfied with the Conscience Clause. It is the evasion, not the removal, of a difficulty. Open to some objections under the voluntary system, it will be open to more under the rate system. I do not refer, of course, to the foolish and insincere complaints against the clause which have been so pertinaciously made in the columns of *The Guardian* and other sympathetic quarters; there is at any rate one really valid objection. It is a miserable thing to have to force daily the religious differences of their elders on to the notice of children. The moral influence of a school *must* suffer when, before he begins the most important lesson, the teacher has to dismiss a part of his scholars because their parents, as every urchin in the class knows, think that what he is about to teach is false. The evil effect of this appears in the religious partisanship which springs up even in national schools. I have, when inspecting a school, occasionally been met by sullen and offended silence on asking a question out of the catechism; and when I thoughtlessly pressed the question, the other children have begun to look at each other, and to titter, and presently some one blurted out the information, "They goes to chapel," and then the titter broke into a laugh at the expense of the sulky little dissenter, who was by this time painfully blushing, or more probably crying.

And when I have drawn the attention of the teacher afterwards to what had taken place, I have been told, "Oh, they often get to fighting about church and chapel in the play-ground." The Conscience Clause is good: in the present state of things it is indispensable; it must always be maintained to protect the parental rights of the minority, however small the minority may be; but I yearn for "a more excellent way."

With the introduction of school-rates another objection will be raised. It will be pointed out by the dissenters that they pay for the religious instruction of the Church children; and when once they see that, they will no longer rest content with the mere exemption of their own children from that instruction. A cry will be raised for the adoption of a plan advocated about twenty years ago by Dr. Hook and others, and then known as the "Combined Plan." According to this plan the paid teacher is confined to instruction in secular subjects, and religious lessons are left to the ministers of the various religious denominations. The scheme failed then because the sectarian leaders who maintained the schools exacted, as the price of their exertions, the right to exclude all special dogmas except their own. With school-rates, however, the scheme becomes possible—only too possible,—for there is a good deal in it which will strike the fancy of the ratepayers. Yet can I hardly imagine that any one practically conversant with the working of national schools would view it with favour. It would weaken the teacher's moral power and impair the discipline of school. Moreover, to see the rabbi, the priest, the parson, and the dissenting minister coming, turn and

turn about, to administer a religious lesson, will be an experience for the children even less wholesome than the spectacle of the daily extrusion of the little Nonconformists from their classes under the Conscience Clause. But the actual issue would be even worse than this. The various ministers would attend very irregularly, and in most cases would soon cease to attend at all. Thus we should drift virtually into secular education.* I have not much fear of the ratepayers deliberately adopting secular education; I have grave apprehensions of their sinking to it, contrary to their real wishes, in some such way as this. Therefore I for one do most earnestly desire to escape these sectarian dangers and difficulties by the adoption of a comprehensive method of Christian teaching, in which the great majority of the ratepayers will acquiesce.

A word I have just used will remind those who are familiar with our education controversies, of another plan, the "comprehensive," which, equally with the "combined," was driven out of the field by the "denominational." It is this plan, the old plan of the British and Foreign School Society, which—with a difference—I am anxious to recommend. The gist of it lay in the prohibition of all religious class-books but the Bible, in the school, and this is the principle to which I would

* Perhaps a somewhat different arrangement may be proposed. The clergy, as already noted, have now secured to them by the trust deeds the control of the religious teaching in the great majority of the existing schools. An obvious and a not unfair proposal would be to give to them only in such schools the right (checked by the Conscience Clause) of religious teaching, the ministers of other denominations being excluded. It is possible, but scarcely probable, that this compromise might last. I think that an agitation for the extension of the right of entry to other ministers would speedily commence, and in the end grow to be irresistible.

recur—without, however, adopting the incredibly silly proviso by which the principle was formerly qualified, or rather stultified,—namely, that it was to be the Bible "without note or comment." It is not easy to understand how any one who knows the difficulty of teaching children, especially the children of the manual-labour class—how quick they are to learn signs and sounds, how slow to attach any sense to those signs and sounds—could ever have accepted such an absurdity, unless indeed he were a Bibliolater, and believed (as some people seem to believe) that the Bible expounds itself to the reader by some sort of perpetual miracle. Any one whose mind was not darkened by that superstition would assume that a national school child would, like the Ethiopian eunuch, be slow to understand, "except some man should guide him." The fact is, the difficulties of elementary instruction were hardly at all realized when the cry of "the Bible without note and comment" was first raised; and the few wiser men who acquiesced in the cry were probably influenced by the wish to conciliate religious people in favour of a system of instruction in which the secular teaching, at any rate, would be genuine, however great a sham the Bible lesson might be.

I believe, however, that after a few years of school-rates we shall be ripe for a comprehensive plan without the ridiculous excrescence. As long as the schoolmaster was the nominee of the clergyman, paid, controlled, and liable to be dismissed by him, the friends of unsectarian teaching felt that they had no security against proselyte-making, unless religious teaching was limited to the bare text of Scripture. But, after all, the security was futile.

A teacher filled with a missionary rabies against dissent might be trusted to extract a caution against chapel-going out of physical geography, and to link the dogma of the apostolical succession with a lesson on duodecimals. The only real security is to be found in the inclinations of the teacher, and we may confidently rely on these being moulded by the wishes of his employer. Henceforth the State, the local tax-payer, and the parent will be the ultimate employer; and if the clerical chairman of the management committee continues to be his immediate employer, yet it will be as their official representative, and on condition that he fairly carries out their views. Under this new order of things we shall not long want a class of intelligent teachers anxious in all honesty to inculcate Christian truth free from sectarian dogma.

I am not without strong hope that in this scheme may be found, in a not distant future, the final—as the Conscience Clause was the provisional and preparatory—solution of our religious difficulties. We are not ripe for it yet. The clergy must be taught, by a few years' experience under the new system, what is required of them in this matter of education as the clergy of a National Church; and if they will not learn, it may come to this—that they will have to stand aside. But they will learn. They are capable, at the present moment,—at least the country clergy are,—of striking in defence of the Catechism almost *en masse*, were "My Lords" to attempt its prohibition; but twenty—ten—nay, five years hence, a profound change will have passed over them. When they begin to see the real issue—namely, that their choice must be between a broadly Christian or a purely secular education

—for that ultimately that will be the only choice I am convinced—they are far too loyal to refuse to teach Christ unless they may also teach their special dogmas.

The only fear is that they may be wise too late. The Tories have given us democracy, and High Churchmen, if they follow such leaders as "brave George Anthony Denison," will inevitably give us secular education. But the State also has not been free from blame. "My Lords" have done nothing for years past in favour of a more liberal system beyond keeping up a worry about the Conscience Clause. The incessant bickerings which they have had with the clergy should have taught the necessity for steadily pursuing an anti-denominational policy. Under the Revised Code, the inspectors have almost ceased to examine in religious subjects, which, in consequence, have been greatly neglected. If the grants had been made liable to large deductions unless the results of the religious examination was satisfactory, if the inspectors had been under strict orders never to examine in the catechism or any formulary, but, while ignoring all distinctive teaching, to insist strongly on a knowledge of Scripture history, especially of the Gospels, we might have been almost ready by this time for the new principle—"The Bible, without any religious formulary, except the Apostles' Creed."* I hope unsectarian bigotry will not rob us of that.

In this principle, honestly carried out, all the denominations would acquiesce except the Jews, the Romanists, and the Unitarians. The two former do not

* I hope the hasty reader will not think that I am abandoning the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. If he does, let him refer to Matt. vi. and Exodus xx.

wish to enter any inclusive system, the latter must be content with the Conscience Clause; we could not comprehend them without descending to that biblical deism which even Mr. Lowe's conscience does not approve. There are no tenable doctrinal grounds, as the nation will clearly see when once attention is called to the point, for the clergy of the Church standing out against sharing a common religious teaching with the "orthodox dissenters." No doctrine will need proscribing that the religious convictions of the nation regard as essential to Christianity. Perhaps the Baptists present the greatest practical difficulty; yet the Evangelicals are far nearer to them in their baptismal views than to the High Churchman. The clergy, whom the State compels to tolerate very wide differences among themselves, may fairly be required, for a great public purpose, to tolerate less differences among the dissenters. If the clergy do struggle against a comprehensive scheme, the laity will suspect—and, may be, sharply act on the suspicion—that it is not on doctrinal but on social grounds that their resistance is grounded; that they are fighting for their ascendency and prerogatives,—fighting in that hateful spirit of ecclesiastical exclusiveness which poisons the atmosphere of Church Congresses.

It may be asked,—How is the abandonment of distinctive Church teaching in national schools to be effected? As I write I receive letters from a friend—one of my partners in this volume, whose services to Church and State in the fight for the Conscience Clause entitle him to be a spokesman for the liberal clergy in the matter of popular education—which warn me that I ought to be quite explicit on this point. Plainly, then, I do not wish

the clergy to be subjected to any compulsion. I do not want to see an edict against the Catechism issue from Downing Street, or resolutions adverse to the use of any portion of the Prayer Book in our schools passed by the district committees of the future. I am writing an essay on "Church Policy," not on "State Policy." I am a clergyman pleading with clergymen, and entreating them to consider the situation before us,—to consider whether we can maintain our distinctive teaching, and whether the effort to maintain it may not cost the land Christian teaching. Downing Street has never loved the denominational system, and when the support of the denominational leaders needs to be bought no longer, it will, with a certain grim satisfaction—remembering the past—turn a deaf ear to their clamours. The rector, appealing to the education minister against the refusal of the district committee to admit his school into union because he will not accept the new, in place of the extinct managers, will meet with very cold comfort. He will be told that he must settle the matter as best he can. If he can persuade his managers to let his school remain a Church school with a Conscience Clause,—well. It is a tolerable, nay, a very good form of school, though not the best. But if he cannot have his way, and still resists, he will be dropped out of the national system, and his school will be supplanted by another, which, for lack of his influence and in consequence of his bigotry, will probably be secular. It is this blind and dogged resistance on the part of High Church clergy—the Broad Churchmen will readily yield, and I think the Evangelicals too, when they understand the alternative—and its consequences which I fear. I cannot anticipate with equanimity the

prospect of a number—may be a large number—of Church schools perishing to make way for secular schools,—convinced, as I am, that we may keep all the present schools, and make almost all the new ones, Christian, if only we will not sacrifice our Master to the supposed interests of our ecclesiastical system. I do not pray, then, for any State ban, whether it proceed from Whitehall or from a district committee-room, upon the denominational system; but I do pray all rectors, vicars, and incumbents, with whom loyalty to Christ over-rides all other considerations, to do their utmost to lead the Church to adopt a policy in this matter that shall be at once national and Christian.

I have pleaded for simple Christian teaching, free from formulary and dogma, as the remedy for our "religious difficulty;" I cannot conclude this essay without attempting to show why I regard such teaching as, in intrinsic value, by far the best.

"Dogma" and "dogmatic" are words which people use without commonly attaching any very clear meaning to them. In giving them what I believe to be a true definition, I shall at once indicate why I dislike dogmatic teaching. A dogma, then, if we look to the derivation, is some statement that has been δεδογμένον, or decreed. Now a decree implies a decreeing authority; and such an authority would never dream of decreeing the truth (or alleged truth) of any doctrine, if it was not questionable, or at any rate questioned. The very fact of a doctrine being δεδογμένον indicates the existence of some doubt respecting it. The object of the decree is to obtain for it credence, or at least additional credence.

We arrive then at this conclusion,—that a dogma is a doctrine for which acceptance is demanded because it has been promulgated by authority.

This definition conceded, the objection to dogmatic teaching is at once apparent. It is immoral teaching, because instead of appealing to the conscience it imposes itself by authority. It should never be forgotten that the things which you believe are themselves only one degree more important than the reasons why you believe. The sublimest truth has little or no moral value so long as it is accepted as a dogma. Thus the reason why their belief in God is to many men almost worthless and barren lies in their acceptance of it as a dogma on the authority of society. It is not till that belief has been borne in upon a man's conscience, till he has seen the beatific vision of God in the beauty of His holiness, and felt the irresistible impulse to bow down and worship, that his faith begins to work for good on his character. Even a national school child ought to be taught to know God, as far as possible, in this way. If he can give no better reason for his belief in God than "Teacher says so," he is only one degree better instructed than the little street Arab who has no conception of God at all. For religious teaching, in any high sense of the words, must be a teaching of the conscience,—a teaching which generates not proxy belief, but personal faith.

Now, in order to educate the conscience there is no method of teaching comparable to that by which God Himself taught the world—I mean the historical method. If you teach a child that he is bound to believe such and such a thing, the idea of disputing your authority never for a moment crosses his mind. But there the matter

ends; there has been no spiritual education. The conscience is untouched. To reach that you must excite his interest, reverence, worship. You must not tell him what to believe, but present something in which he will spontaneously believe. Or rather some person. The child's homage, no more than the man's, can be fully evoked by abstract goodness. It needs goodness incarnate to command his worship. In a word, what the child needs to know thoroughly is the life of Christ. With every particular of that biography he should be rendered familiar. He should be taught how the Old Testament history leads up to Christ, how the history of the Apostles and of the early Church looks back to Christ. All should be made to centre in Christ; the whole effort of the teacher should be directed to give the scholar a vivid conception of Christ. Such teaching would be a constant appeal to the conscience. Once presented to the children, Christ Himself will do the rest. He will win them, draw them; they will worship Him. For even young children can do much more than "say prayers"—they can really worship. They will learn to connect all their thoughts of God with Jesus, and in their conscious cravings "to be good"—(and under right training such cravings come early to children)—they will really appreciate and welcome the "good news" that Jesus can and will send a Spirit like His own into those who pray for it. National school children taught thus—and I have known such children so taught—will never need a dogma about the Trinity in Unity; for they believe—not profoundly, of course, but still genuinely—in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I am aware, of course, that the actual lesson is only a

part of the religious teaching in the school. The discipline of the school, the good habits enforced, the example of the master, the moral tone he imparts to his flock,—all constitute an important element in the work. But to crown all this, to give a meaning to all this, we want the story of—

> "——the sinless years
> That breathed beneath the Syrian blue."

And sure am I that if ever English laymen begin to dream dreams and see visions of such an elementary instruction in religion as this for children of the manual-labour class, they will insist, with an insistence that shall bear down all opposition, that the clergy of their national church shall either sink their jealousies and dogmas, and teach Christ thus, or else make way for those who will.

Between a dogma and a formulary there is a wide difference. The very same set of words may of course be both—a dogma under one aspect, a formulary under another—but the purpose in each case is different. The man who concocts a formulary is not thinking of gaining currency for it by authority; he is only seeking to express his belief in correct and concise language. A formulary, then, is a doctrine, an article of belief, cut and dried into brief and convenient phraseology; and the use to which a schoolmaster puts it is, of course, to set the children to learn it by rote.

To set children to learn formularies by rote is about the profoundest mistake which can be made in elementary education. To both teacher and scholar the formulary is a snare. To the former, because to hammer it into a class requires no intellectual effort, and because

when it has been hammered in there is some palpable result to show for his teaching—almost as palpable as a neatly-written copy-book. To the children it is also a snare, for it saves them also intellectual effort, which children are very slow to make. Like their elders, too, they are subject to the common delusion that they understand a thing if they have words in which to express it. Ask a national school class, "How are you saved?" and they will shout in reply, "By the blood of Jesus." It never enters into their heads for a moment that they do not understand what they say. If they understand the separate words used, they think they understand the sentence; and of course in a sense they do understand "saved," "blood," and "Jesus." If the formulary contains words they do not understand, they will be conscious of their ignorance; and then probably they will attach a wrong meaning to the unintelligible word, or more probably actually change it to some other word or words of similar sound. Thus in past years, when the vocabulary of a Lancashire artisan was limited to about 130 words, exclusive of those belonging to his trade, "hallowed be Thy Name," was corrupted into "I'll be wed i' Thy name." What the "factory hand" understood by this he probably never asked himself—"wed" and "name" were words included in his vocabulary, and that was enough.

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the fact that a doctrine or a principle, or anything in the least abstract, is never properly understood until the learner is wholly independent of the words in which it is expressed. Every intelligent preacher knows that the stereotyped phraseology of the pulpit is the bane of

pulpit teaching. The orthodox sentences come out Sunday by Sunday, and convey no meaning to the great majority of the congregation. Any preacher who in the least understands his work is aware, that if he is really to teach, to arouse genuine feeling and thought, he must incessantly vary his language; that if Scripture itself is not to be a dead letter, he must first, by the medium of modern language, instil into his hearers' minds Scriptural ideas, and refrain from quoting Holy Writ till they are prepared to see that Scriptural language is the fullest and truest expression for those ideas that can possibly be found.

And what is necessary for adults in church is even more necessary for children in school. I have a great respect for the Catechism; I honestly regard it as one of the very happiest compendiums of religious formularies that was ever compiled, and (as I gladly acknowledge that such formularies have most legitimate uses of their own) I have not the least wish to be quit of it—except in school. There it has been one of the greatest hindrances to religious education.

I am well aware that in these utterances I am as yet a *vox clamantis in eremo.* If Church formularies were proscribed now, we should only get Bible texts turned into formularies in their stead. But we have already made great progress in intelligent religious instruction as compared with the days when "Pontius Pilate had the measles." And now, though there has been a reaction under the malign influence of the Revised Code, we may hope that we shall speedily make more. I venture then to indulge my day-dream of an ideal national school. In that school there will be much

learning of hymns and even of texts; but the latter will be simple ones from the Gospels, not doctrinal ones from the Epistles: they will be chiefly the sayings of Jesus; and both hymns and texts will be learnt, not as tasks, but by rhythmic repetition of the whole class, or the whole school. The prime of the morning will be chosen for the Scripture lesson, when the children are steadied but still fresh, and are not yet glancing in restless impatience at the slow hands of the clock. The teaching will be almost entirely oral; the Bible will never be degraded into a reading-book. The teacher will seek all proper accessories for his work: the infants will first learn by the help of well-chosen *coloured* prints; the higher classes will be interested by maps and illustrations, and collateral information intended to make the human circumstances of Christ's ministry intelligible and life-like. From such a school it seems to me that few boys or girls would go without carrying out with them into the world some true childlike worship of Him who toiled throughout Jewry and Galilee, and crowned that toil on Calvary.

VII.

THE CHURCH IN THE COLONIES.

CHURCH questions are commonly discussed under very different conditions from those of secular politics. Discussions of the latter class turn on measures of which the immediate adoption is proposed, and even the advocates of those measures rarely claim for them any longer applicability than to present circumstances and the proximate future. When a settlement is made of questions so fundamental that their frequent mooting is deemed to be peculiarly mischievous, such as the parliamentary suffrage, it is hoped, rather than confidently expected, that it will last out the generation; but this is about the extreme limit to which it is supposed that foresight can reach. But any great change in the ecclesiastical institutions of a country is an event rare out of all comparison with the rareness even of the greatest mutations in its secular politics: and it is, therefore, also discussed much longer beforehand, and a settlement when made is intended to be made more durable. It is, for the same reason, necessary that ecclesiastical questions should be discussed with more reference to principle. The mere abundance of the secular questions which are always

coming up for discussion produces in those who deal with them a certain empirical tact or habit of action, which makes it comparatively easy to see the bearings of a new question as soon as mooted, and enables men to take their sides on it without much reasoning, but generally very much in accordance with the result to which each would be led by the most careful reasoning from his respective principles. But as successive generations may pass away without any one in them being called upon to choose his line in ecclesiastical questions, if preparation were not made by early and careful discussion for the rare times when something must be done about them, the pressure of mere uneasiness would at last, when the situation became intolerable, compel a blind resort to ill-considered change.

There are signs that some great change with regard to the Established Church of England is near enough at hand to make the discussion of the subject already necessary. The assailants of the Establishment are not more numerous or energetic than at many previous periods, but it is on the balance of the attack and defence that the result depends, and the defenders of the Establishment in its present form were perhaps never fewer or less hearty than now. Let us briefly consider the causes of this, as concerns both the general lay mind of the country and the clerical parties with that section of the laity which is much mixed up with them.

To the general lay mind, the Established Church does not give enough liberty of thought. The growth of scientific—which means nothing more than accurate—knowledge, has changed belief on some important points connected with the past or the future of man, and altered

the data of probability as to others. Thus, what is now known of the history of animal life has made it impossible to believe that death came into the world by sin, and highly probable that different species had not an independent origin. Again, changed modes of viewing human relations have brought with them changes in the modes of viewing divine ones. Thus, since it has been admitted that reformation is an indispensable end in human systems of punishment, it has become impossible to believe at the same time in the eternity of divine punishment and in the omnipotence of the Deity. It has appeared, rather unexpectedly, that some of the new beliefs may be taught in the Establishment, and the same thing may yet be proved of more of them. But no one supposes that this can be proved of all those which have taken deep root among the laity; and even if it could, there would remain the facts that such great changes of belief produce an unsettled feeling as to further points, and that although a laity itself convinced may like to impose its convictions on the clergy, yet a laity which suspects further inquiry to be necessary can put no confidence in teachers who, as long as they retain their office, are tied to foregone conclusions. Nor is it only the toleration of belief within the Church which is in question. The tone of the services is not always accordant with beliefs now ascertained to be tolerated; and whether it is from this tone, from their length, their little variety, or other circumstances in their character, the attendance on the services does not indicate any very hearty degree of attachment. Lastly, the causes and the phenomena alluded to are most operative and evident among the best educated and the working-classes—precisely those

who, under the new constitution of Parliament, are likely to be the most powerful. That portion of the laity which acts with the clerical parties is strongest in those strata of English society to which the Reform Act of 1832 was more favourable than that of 1867.

But the clerical parties themselves were never less forward than now in defending the Establishment. They have drawn closer together in order the better to resist the change of belief to which I have referred; and it has happened, as the necessity of the case required, that the leadership of the confederacy has been tacitly conceded to that one of them which carried highest the principle of authority, the very principle which an Establishment holds in check. To see how this works, take for instance the doctrine of the eternity of punishment, or that of the absolute truth of the Bible in every part, either of which it has now been held may be legally denied in the Church of England. Both the High and the Low Church parties would gladly impose them by authority, but it is only the former which claims to possess an organized authority for the purpose. To that party, and to it alone, the clergy are the officers of a society existing independently of the law, the institution of which was a primary part of Christianity itself, and which, by its councils and synods, may make new definitions, and enforce them by spiritual censures. It is not to be wondered at that the High Church party, with these pretensions, has gained immensely on the other; and that if it could only put them in force so as to pronounce the desired sentences, the remaining Low Churchmen would seem as though they silently acquiesce in so gratifying an exercise of prerogatives, the existence of which they once stoutly denied.

But no more is it to be overlooked that the Establishment, in the face of whose law these pretensions cannot be put in force, neither receives, nor is likely to receive under such circumstances, any very hearty support from either of the Church parties.

Thus on all sides the defence of the Establishment is paralysed. And if, for such clue as may be obtainable to the probability that the tide will turn, we look to our contemporaries abroad, who are often a kind of anticipated posterity, we shall see that among them the principles of free thought and authority stand opposed to one another with a sharpness of delineation which has not yet been attained in England. But without venturing a prediction as to the continuance of the state of things described, it is at least certain that, if it should continue, the victory of the assailants of the Establishment is only a question of time: neither *vis inertiæ*, nor the difficulty, greatly exaggerated, of deciding what should be done with the estates and tithes, would long hinder it. I say "long" with reference to the time which, as already pointed out, ecclesiastical changes take in preparing. In a parliamentary sense, the Church of England is not a question of the day; but it is not too soon, for those who would not have it simply replaced by the Voluntary Principle, to consider what other turn should be given to the change which seems to be preparing.

I have undertaken to offer, in favour of the principle of an Establishment, such arguments as arise from the relation of the mother country to the colonies and dependencies; but in a volume in which the writers are independent of one another, and more especially in one which combines clerical and lay contributors, a certain

latitude of preface seemed necessary in order to define the point of view of each writer, and in this instance to indicate the persons to whom alone anything I can say must be deemed to be addressed. These are those to whom I have ventured to refer as representing the general lay mind of the country, neither irreverent nor irreligious, but not deeply attached to dogma, and certainly not holding many dogmas which in too large a number of churches, whether of the High or of the Low party, are now enforced with an obtrusiveness that seems to have grown with the isolation of their clerical defenders. It is they alone who will sufficiently go along with the assumptions which in a short essay it is necessary for me to make; but their power, if they knew it, and if they could agree in the objects for which to use it, is so great that in fact the issue lies with them. A voluntary system, if we might dream of its being accompanied by the absolute prohibition of the endowment of dogma, so that its ministers might be always thrown on the living generation for support, would be one thing; a system such as that of English nonconformity, nominally voluntary, but really in great part that of dogmas endowed by private caprice, is another thing. Under the former, the ministry might be wanting in independence, and the civilizing presence of an educated clergyman would cease to be secured to every remote parish; but the bribing of the living to accept the sway of the dead resides equally in the endowment of dogma, whether provided by law or not; the peculiar difference of national endowment is that impartial tribunals, and a large and equitable public opinion, control their administration. While the Church, remaining

dogmatic to its present extent, is necessarily more and more left to the management of the traditional parties, thousands tacitly retire from external connexion with it, who yet desire nothing less than that the religious element should be let to slip out of life; thousands in whom that element is stronger, or whose convictions are not quite so sharply offended by much that they hear in church, or who care more to separate themselves from their neighbours, swell, in subscription lists, by pew-rents, and in various other ways, the force of traditional parties with which they have little sympathy. What could either of these gain if religion should be represented by differing churches, each more exclusive and more pointedly dogmatic than the national one now is? That religion will die out in England seems a chimerical fear; and if those to whom I refer should work in that direction, it would not be impossible to infuse a principle of liberty into the Establishment, by which it might be kept in continual correspondence with the real breadth and depth of religion in the land.

Such a Church would be a powerful instrument for England in executing her task of spreading the best civilization over the world. The magnitude of this task is seldom sufficiently realized. The dominion of Canada having attained a degree of development which places it beyond the direct influence of English institutions, and, in proportion to its development, standing forth, with the United States, as the most striking monument of British colonial enterprise, we are apt to forget the extent of the remaining field, and the fact that Britain alone seems destined to fill it. Less than half the coasts of Australia and Southern Africa have been fringed with

colonies, which, as well as those of Tasmania and New Zealand, are still in a condition to feel our direct influence; while the regions yet untouched, but suited to European colonization, include vast interior tracts on the Australian and African continents, besides the remainder of their coasts, and many an important island. Nor does any other European people seem disposed to share the settlement of these great areas with the inhabitants of this island. The Dutch element at the Cape of Good Hope has not been reinforced from home since the British conquest of the colony, seventy years ago. A copious stream of emigration pours from Germany into the United States, but not into the British possessions. The Irishman usually takes his labour, as the German artisan his technical skill, to populations already dense enough to present an ample market for it. But to clear the forest, or cover the downs with flocks, and to found there the beginnings of a nation, seems the especial province of the Englishman and the Scotchman. It demands all that our emigrating classes are best able to furnish; a little means to start with, a little skill in the common occupations of life, the greatest energy, self-reliance, and power of enduring solitude. It is even the Englishman on whom the task mainly devolves; for the Scotchman, generally better educated, tends more to trade, or to India.

Now, wherever the Englishman colonizes, the chief link which in the early stages maintains his connexion with a more developed society is to be found in the English clergyman. A generation before the university, half a generation before the high-school, preceding by yet longer intervals the time when either the university

or the high-school will fully extend its influence into the remote corners of the colony, and equally in advance of the residence of a class combining leisure with literary cultivation; inferior to the nonconformist minister in theological zeal, but not so either in the teaching or in the example of Christian morals, and greatly his superior in learning; the representative of the Church of England is really, to a considerable extent, in these parts of the earth, that which he once was, and which Coleridge was still inclined to see in him in most of the rural parishes of England, the representative of civilization. And he is so by virtue of his connexion with the Church at home, not through any legal status accorded to him in the colony. No law devotes tithes or levies a tax for religious purposes. The salaries of a few colonial chaplains, and of the bishops and archdeacons in India, besides an annual grant or two elsewhere in aid of private contributions, are paid out of public money; but the whole is hardly more than a moderate provision for the presumed religious wants of the public servants, civil and military, who are sent out from England. Here and there an allowance for native education, entrusted to the administration of the English bishop or clergy, increases rather their means of usefulness than their incomes; but since the secularization of the lands in Canada called the Clergy Reserves, no encouragement has been held out to settlers to rely on any public source for the maintenance of religion. Nor does the Colonial Church share the power more freely than the emoluments of an Establishment. In the highly conservative colony of Jamaica, the Bishop has received special powers from an Act of the local Parliament, and similar powers may

exist in the case of sees created by letters patent in colonies where the right of legislation remained in the Crown; but as a general rule it may be said that the Church of England in the colonies is in the same legal position as other voluntary bodies. But the peculiarity which she enjoys there lies in being the Church of England, in appealing in the most powerful manner to the sentiment of attachment to home and to the institutions of home, which grows in the wilderness even on those in whom it has been weakened before leaving our shores, and in aiding the narrow resources of settlers, still combating the first difficulties of a colony, with the ample means which attend on a national position. These means are not to be measured by the contributions which the voluntary institutions of a national church draw from sources that would be closed to any appeal from a more sectarian body, although such indeed are not inconsiderable. The Gospel Propagation Society and the Colonial Bishoprics Fund would never have attained to nearly their actual dimensions had they counted their subscribers among those only to the dissemination of whose views it is now attempted to make them subservient. In proof of this, it is sufficient to quote the example of that munificent lady, the practical foundress of the sees of Capetown and Adelaide, who has publicly testified her disapprobation of the ecclesiastical pretensions of the Bishop of Capetown, and the value which she sets on the connexion of the Colonial Church with the Crown, for maintaining the application of her donations to the purposes for which they were designed. But a national church draws the personal, as well as the pecuniary aid, which it can afford to the colonists, from a

wider area than would be open to any other. As there are men in the National Church who have attained to a higher point of view than she yet recognises in her corporate character, so there are, among the denominations, exceptional instances of the same kind; but the rarity of these exceptions is, and must be, in proportion to the degree on which any communion is based on a denominational idea. The National Church, which in its liturgical forms and articles of peace never presents the neat rotundity of a true denominational aspect, and has been more than once modified in such aspect of that kind as it presents, is found, as might have been expected, to be almost the only field in which those can work who are not called to think and write, but by personal sympathy and influence to extend the practical sway over human life and conduct of principles already acknowledged, and who in doing so, while they refuse to be cramped by any narrow denominational limits, yet neither wish nor would dare to ignore any of the spiritual influences on which the cultivation they offer depends. Of such men, who in their respective parishes form no small part of the total agency now working for good in England, a supply will continue to flow to the colonies and dependencies also, as long as branches of the Church of England exist there; and in the colonies and dependencies their importance is all the greater, not only from the comparative want, already alluded to, of other forms in which the higher culture and best morality of the mother country might be presented, but because there alone another of the great functions of Britain can be performed.

We are called not only to found new Christian states,

but to be the mediators between Christianity and Heathendom, in all forms of the latter, from savage Africa to the most philosophical sects of India and China. It will hardly be necessary for the present writer, after what has preceded, to avow his belief that this will be a real mediation, that it will not result in imposing on any large section of mankind, simply and unmodified, any one of the conceptions of human life and destiny, and of the relations of both to the eternal, which at present divide Christendom among themselves. But he is as far from believing that the principles of Christianity will prove less equal to assimilating what is good in the Asiatic, than they proved formerly to assimilating what was good in the Roman and Teutonic worlds. There is, indeed, a process of assimilation for which the Church is already called on within Christendom itself, but which it does not fall within the scope of this essay to enlarge on—that of the scientific and historical discoveries before alluded to—now for the most part fresh and bare, like volcanic islands newly cast up, and needing a vesture of appropriate moral sentiment before they can take their place among the beliefs in which man, as a spiritual being, can make his home. But the assimilation, whether of these facts which obtrude themselves upon us, or of the Eastern world which we are impelled to seek out, must, as all previous assimilations, include development; and the possibility of Christian development must depend on the degree in which all that is vital in Christianity itself, and all the intellectual activity which has grown up on the soil and under the influence of Christianity, can be concentrated for the contact with that which has to be assimilated. If such concentration be

possible, there is no reason why it should not take place in the National Church; while, if we should admit that no scope can be afforded for it in the National Church, either as the latter now exists, or as any possible modification of the ecclesiastical law might cause it to exist, that would be as much as to say that the moving spiritual forces of the nation have diverged too widely for common action in any yet recognised direction; that, in short, any further development must be outside of Christianity.

Where Christianity is in contact with savage heathendom, there can of course be no question of the assimilation of any new spiritual type; but there is then a question of great practical importance to the welfare of the native tribes, and through them of the colonists—that of seizing every point in their beliefs and mental habits which may smooth their passage to Christianity, or otherwise promote their advancement, and extending a liberal toleration in all matters of merely contingent obligation, to whatever may be suitable to a state of transition. It is not to be wondered at that these merits should oftener be found in the representatives of the spiritual culture of a nation, than in the missionaries of a dogma; and it is a significant fact that Bishop Colenso, the stoutest maintainer in our time of the national character of the Colonial Church, has been also conspicuous for his enlightened treatment of the Zulus, and has incurred obloquy on that account from the same ecclesiastical parties who appear to be incapable of enjoying their own, without attacking his, lawful freedom. On neither point, however, are his labours and devotion without reward. Perhaps the most remarkable

savage race in any of our colonies, equal to the Maoris in industry and intelligence, and their superiors in order, have named him in their language "the father of raising up;" and without having transgressed the doctrinal limits permitted in the Church of England, he is aiding to impress a high moral and intellectual standard on a rising colony, while the acknowledgment of his episcopal superintendence by half the clergy, and the great mass of the Church of England laity of the diocese, testifies to the compatibility of Church fellowship with wide differences in opinion.

To maintain this position for the Colonial Church, destitute as it has been shown to be of state powers and state endowment, involves no outrage perpetrated by the military force of another island in favour of a small and alien minority; it simply demands that the Sovereign, by the exercise of her legal powers, shall continue in the colonies the existence of an actual branch of the Church of England, as distinguished from any other Church in so-called communion with it. The "union and full communion with the Church of England," which is claimed by the *soi-disant* Church of South Africa, recently set up by the Bishop of Capetown and his supporters, is an empty name for all but mischief. The claim made by the words "full communion" is well founded, but only belongs to the Church of South Africa in common with all other Christian Churches in the world,—Christian baptism, perhaps together with confirmation, if the Church to which the person belonged possessed that ceremony, being certainly the only formal condition which an English clergyman could require for admitting any one to the sacrament of the Holy

Communion. The claim made by the word "union" is unfounded, nor could it receive a justification from any acts that the convocation of either province, or any synod or council of bishops might do, there being no person or body, except Parliament, possessing authority to unite any foreign or colonial church with the Church of England, or to establish between the latter and any one Church a closer tie than between it and another. The utmost that can be accomplished by any members of convocation, or bishops taking part in such synods or councils, is to commit themselves personally to expressions or acts of approval or sympathy, and perhaps also to pledge themselves, in their individual characters, to the observance of rules which, when the occasion arises, may seriously fetter them in the exercise of discretions attached to their offices, and which the parties interested may require to be duly and legally exercised.

It is no such vain—or worse than vain—title that the Colonial Church needs, but to be secured in this, that her liberty shall be permanently equal to that of the National Church at home, the laws of the latter being her laws, so that judicial cognizance may be taken of them by the courts which may have to decide suits arising among her members. For this purpose it is immaterial whether the letters patent of any colonial bishop give to him personally, or to any officers of his, or dependant on him, the power of enforcing obedience to his orders in the performance of his episcopal duties, or the power of removing any obstruction which may be interposed to prevent his performing any of the functions of a bishop; or whether to enforce such obedience, or to remove such obstructions, he must have recourse to the civil tribunals

which administer the law of the colony, before which tribunals the person who resists the acts of the bishop may contest the validity or legality of those acts, or of the orders given by him. His *status* or position as a bishop, and the advantage which accrues to the colony from it, are independent of whether he must have recourse to the secular arm, or can act effectually by his own power.* The vital point is that, for those who choose to avail themselves of it, there shall be a Church which in its discipline, its culture, and its spiritual tone, shall faithfully represent the National Church of this country; which shall live with its life and grow with its growth; which shall be able to throw its whole energy into the laborious pastoral duties of a poor and thinly-peopled settlement, and yet share by an inherent right, and become the channel of communicating, all those conquests of thought and feeling to which its more fortunate brethren at home may be guided by their leisure and opportunities.

Against these great advantages, those who advocate disconnecting the Church from the State set the superior energy and moral dignity which they conceive would be enjoyed by a free Church. It might be sufficient to answer that, from the point of view which I announced in the beginning of this essay, no Church can be deemed to be really free in which the lay element is not the controlling one, and that, as was remarked by the Dean of Westminster on a recent occasion, it is only in the nation that the true lay element is found to act, that the laymen

* For most of the expressions used in this and the preceding sentence to explain the difference intended, I am indebted to Lord Romilly's judgment in Colenso *v.* Gladstone.

who associate themselves with the clergy in voluntary organizations are but a kind of quasi-clergymen. But, to meet the argument on the ground of those who use it, what is the Church which they expect would gain in energy and moral dignity? Do they anticipate that it would be identical or commensurate with the Church which now exists? The freedom they aim at includes, as one of its most important and to them most attractive features, the power to define dogma, to forge new shackles as fast as new questions are opened. But as to the substance of the definitions to be made, would the Church parties agree in any direction except against the common enemy—independent thought? Or, as to the authority to be attributed to the clergy, and especially the episcopal order, in making the definitions, would they agree at all? The latter question is one to be seriously considered by those who would, as they call it, liberate the Colonial Church from the fetters of the royal supremacy. They are galled at seeing the sentence of deprivation passed by the Metropolitan of Capetown on the Bishop of Natal remain, for most practical purposes, entirely ineffectual. But they should remember that under no circumstances would the majority of those who now deem themselves members of the Church of England permit any real effect to be given to a sentence passed by such a court, not in pursuance, but in advance, of written definitions of dogma previously agreed to. The constitution and pretensions of the Court involved all those claims on behalf of the clerical, and especially the episcopal, order, against which the Low Church or Evangelical party uniformly contended, until, as I have already pointed out, their hatred of the claims was

merged for a time in delight at seeing them put in force against a still more hated foe. Such an alliance has a natural term; it could not survive the time when the episcopate, becoming independent of the State, should be in a position to enforce on its adherents a belief in baptismal regeneration, or the real presence, as well as one in the verbal infallibility of the Bible. It is an alliance which, under the shield of an impartial government, may be entered upon at pleasure, in the expectation that it may also be dropped at pleasure in case it should appear to threaten unpleasant consequences; but if, in the meantime, the encouragement thus thoughtlessly given to the craving for a legislating judicature should result in pulling down that impartial government, the allies will find that their mutual differences are too wide for any other end but disruption, that the Church which is to gain in energy and dignity will cease even to exist—will merely add its ruined fragments to the long list of the present denominations.

In this connexion it will be useful to consider the question of endowments; for although in the Colonial Church their magnitude is not great, and the question which arises about them is very much simplified by their all being the fruits of private liberality, yet they may afford an illustration of what, on a large scale, and with much greater attendant difficulties of principle, will have to be dealt with in Ireland, and in England also if her day of disestablishment should come. It is clear, as a matter of law, that the Colonial Church Bishoprics Fund, and any estates which may have been purchased, or buildings which may have been erected, for the use of the Church of England in the colonies, belong to that

Church as she is, and not to any body, different in principles and constitution, which at some future time may profess to represent her. If, unhappily, the royal supremacy should be withdrawn from the Colonial Church, and a part of its members should choose to belong to some body claiming a power to develop dogma like that which the Metropolitan of Capetown has assumed to exercise, those who determined to abide by the fortunes of the Church of England, and, though no longer her members, to follow her doctrine and discipline as their model, would be legally entitled to have the estates and buildings secured for them. The same might possibly be held as to the Colonial Bishoprics Fund; but if not, and no more bishops were so appointed as to satisfy the peculiar conditions under which that fund was subscribed, conditions which did not merely point to the Church of England as a model, but expressly contemplated co-operation with the Sovereign's Government in carrying them into effect, it would have either to revert to the donors so far as they could be traced, or to be administered *cy-près*, i.e. for uses deemed by a court of equity to be similar to those which were intended but had failed. These are results which, with regard to the Colonial Church, could not indeed cause any embarrassment. The law might not be appealed to in all its strictness, and the British and Colonial Parliaments might step in to give legislative sanction to any equitable arrangements which the parties interested might be disposed to make; or, if the law had its complete course, the property at stake is not of such magnitude as to be of any public concern, whatever might be the result. But have those who, not without com-

placency, contemplate the Church of England being let go, as was said by Mr. Gladstone in a late debate, with the value of 80,000,000*l.* or 90,000,000*l.* sterling, considered what Church there would or could be, to be started in so magnificent a manner?

The disposal of this sum by the State would of course be guided by considerations not of law but of policy, the comparatively small portions of her property which have accrued to the Church from private liberality mostly dating from an antiquity after which the intentions of donors are no longer much considered, and when certainly no donors contemplated anything like the present Church of England. But then it is impossible to imagine that Parliament would ever endow so richly a body whose future it placed beyond its own control, while giving to the body itself free power to modify its future. The freedom and the parting endowment, which are both so much coveted by one of the Church parties, will not, it may safely be predicted, be allowed to go together. Some small parting gift might perhaps be made to those who were content to abide by the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England as the law last left her: not even those who are the most pleased that she should retain the wealth, so long as she retains the grand possibilities for the future, which belong to a National Church, could wish the gift to be great, if made to a stereotyped, and therefore lifeless, impression of her actual state. But how many would there be in any possible Parliament to dream, not of maintaining—for it does not exist—but of instituting, with public money, a rich Church claiming, as a condition of its usefulness and moral dignity, and as the

meaning and purpose of its liberty, to uphold a definite system, as those words are understood by theological parties? Or, if Parliament were so mad, how many of the parties, each of which has its own definite system, could be united in such an institution? If the Church will learn to place her ideal of liberty in freedom to act and think, then, where no ancestral crimes have been cherished until it is too late, she may enjoy that liberty, the only one with which Christ has made her free, in connexion with the people and with the law: if she will place it in the power to denounce, her separation from the people and the law must come at last, but her disrupted fragments will carry with them neither internal nor external dignity.

VIII.

THE CHURCH AS A TEACHER OF MORALITY.

Upon the question whether the Christian community is to be regarded by its teachers as one and homogeneous, or as divided between a small number of true believers, the children of light, and a large number of merely nominal believers, the disguised children of darkness, depends more than is commonly perceived the whole character of Christian teaching. Those teachers who take the latter view will practically abandon all moral questions; those who take the former will, unless some counteracting influence intervenes, occupy themselves as much with morality as with religion.

That the High Church party, who have generally shrunk much more than the Evangelicals from drawing the perilous line of demarcation, have nevertheless not occupied themselves much more with moral questions, is due to such a counteracting influence. They have been (until quite recently) for the most part conservatives, attached by temper and tradition to the existing order of things both political and social. They have been disposed to regard all moral questions as settled already, and when they have possessed activity of mind they

have exerted it not so much in speculative investigation of what ought to be held as in antiquarian inquiries into what has been held. But suppose a large and liberal Christian feeling to inspire men unshackled by a spirit of deference to authority, and it seems to me evident that it can only issue in a most searching revision and criticism of all the institutions, usages, and customs of society; in short, in a new political and a new ethical doctrine.

That no such result flows from Christian feeling, even when it is warm, in the case of the teacher who divides his congregation, is intelligible enough. Moral teaching seems to him thrown away upon the great majority of his flock, for they have not yet, as he thinks, received the inward spirit without which all external morality is worthless. On the other hand, though it would be useful to the small minority, yet he cannot think it absolutely essential to them, for they, he holds, are safe already, and he cannot spare them more than a hasty and occasional thought, occupied as he is in the urgent and infinite labour of saving those who seem to him to be perishing before his eyes. Besides, all the reforming zeal which any high-minded man might feel in observing the condition of society, and which might be expected to become a furnace seven times heated in the Christian minister, is cooled in him by his habit of taking the evil for granted. He is not surprised at anything in a world which, he is accustomed to repeat, "lieth in wickedness." In fact, much as he inveighs against the ungodly world, his secret vexation is that he cannot clearly make it out to be as bad as his theology declares it to be.

The consequence of this fact, that the pulpits of England are in the hands either of men who are slaves

to tradition or of men who divide their congregation, is that lamentable one which drives many patriotic men who are not hostile to religion into active hostility to all religious bodies,—namely, that the people of England are not taught morality at all. The task is entrusted to the clergy of teaching the community what is right and what is wrong, and it cannot be said that in any practical sense of the word they perform it.

To say this is not to say that they do nothing, or that what they do is not in itself as valuable as what they leave undone. Christianity founds morality upon theology, and besides theological doctrines it offers other influences,—the human example of Christ, the lives of prophets, apostles, and saints,—in order to accomplish that which it regards as the essential and difficult preparation for morality; namely, the general disposing of the will towards right and orderly action. It is in laying this theological basis and in bringing to bear these preparatory influences that Christian teachers occupy themselves almost exclusively. I do not find fault with what they do, but it seems to me none the less lamentable that they should leave the direct teaching of morality almost entirely undone.

By the teaching of morality I do not mean the teaching that we ought to be moral, but the teaching what is moral and what is not. The former kind of teaching enters into most sermons, though I am afraid not quite all. The latter is, of course, not entirely absent; but, when we are speaking of the average of sermons, it is impossible to concede more. Obvious vices are stigmatized, but the less obvious parts of morality, which of course need most explanation, receive very little, and the

great extent and the constantly shifting and progressive character of moral duty is not recognised. Any one who inquires for the moral result of so much zealous preaching will discover, I think, just this,—a moral sense really awakened, but instructed only on one point; namely, the duty of relieving distress.

A school of Christian teachers has sprung up of late years which neither divides the congregation nor defers to tradition. The Broad Church party, like the High Church party, or still more like the Catholic Church, aspires to guide, not a small selection out of the community, but the community itself. It has none of the old pietistic shyness, none of that shrinking from the affairs of the world and society which is so visible in all sectarian Christianity, and which sometimes assumes the form of an intense nervous antipathy to human beings. It admires the mediæval Church and Cromwell; it sympathises with all the attempts which Christianity has made to influence secular government, and to impose its law upon whole communities. But it is unlike the modern Catholic Church, or the old High Church party of England, in not being conservative. By being intensely conservative at a time when society moves with a speed like that of the planet itself through space, the ecclesiastical systems that aspire to government become more hateful to the world than the inoffensive pietistic societies which pretend to nothing of the kind. But the Broad Church party is thoroughly liberal. It hates obstruction, finality, and every sort of unnatural constraint. It hates in an especial manner what may be called ecclesiasticism, so that the clergy of this school are in a manner at war with their own order, deplore constantly the weaknesses

and mistakes of "divines," and in all disputes appeal to the judgment of the laity. It repudiates the principle of authority in the investigation of truth; and if it abides by some ancient beliefs, and would retain them as the basis of modern order, does so on the ground that they are true, and that they are the best and strongest foundation upon which modern order can be based.

Before this party, then, there evidently lies a task to which the older parties were not equal. No conservative prejudices, no theological despair, need hinder them from giving the people a Christian morality suited to the age.

Nor is there any reason why the people should not receive them as their instructors. That the people should have little confidence in existing religious bodies is natural. A conservative Church linked to the governing aristocracy could not hope to gain the full confidence of any class but the aristocracy; the classes that were intolerant of the aristocracy were naturally dissatisfied with the Church. On the other hand, the Churches of the converted, which so ostentatiously proclaim themselves the Churches of an extreme minority, must expect to be regarded by the majority they excommunicate with the same feelings with which the Irish Church is regarded by the Irish population. Broad Churchmen, without partyties, without theological exclusions, may reasonably hope to win the confidence of every class. Nor does there seem to be any other agency by which the people can be satisfactorily instructed in morality. The proposal is sometimes made to take morality away from the clergyman and hand it over to the schoolmaster. I should like very well to see some direct teaching of morality

introduced into schools. But the art of living well cannot be despatched in a few school lessons. It is evidently an art which demands the study of a life. Adults as well as children require instruction in it, and in any properly ordered state such instruction would be most solicitously and amply provided. The need for it is so great that other agencies have been tempted to do something towards furnishing the supply which the clergy have neglected to furnish. Journalism has evidently among its other functions assumed this of moral guidance. Most Englishmen probably get their morality from their paper as exclusively as they get their religion, when they get it at all, from their favourite preacher. And the best journals no doubt discharge this function exceedingly well. But a clergy earnestly occupied with the task would be in many respects a better agency than journalism. The ministry of journalism, so to speak, is a sectarian and voluntary ministry. The journalist is to a great extent bound to the opinions of the particular section of the public for which he writes. He is more absolutely dependent on his flock than any nonconformist preacher. To this are added the evils of irresponsibility, perpetual acrid controversy with rival journalists, and want of influence over the large class of people who never read.

If, then, the Broad Church clergy (who are scattered through all sects, though I suppose the largest number of them to belong to the Established Church) are willing to undertake this great and necessary work of the moral education of the people, let us consider what will be the conditions of performing it efficiently. First, a large and deep intellectual cultivation. They will have care-

fully to avoid the example set by the schools that have preceded them in the Church. If, like High Churchmen, they intended to teach a conservative doctrine to a stationary people, they might well dispense with this. They might dispense with it if, like the Methodists and Evangelicals of the last century, they had the mission of teaching the simplest lessons of Christianity to a neglected and barbarized population. But their doctrine allies itself with progress, and travels in company with education. It intends to rule and organize a complicated society. Its priests, therefore, must be qualified to guide men in thinking rather than to save them from the trouble of thought, and to teach, not the rudiments, but the more advanced lessons of morality. It is evident, therefore, that they must be learned, but not with the conservative erudition, the knowledge of authorities and precedents, which has characterised the older schools of divinity. Their learning must be the instrument and material of original thought, not the substitute for it; it must be a knowledge of modern affairs rather than ancient, of the present rather than the past.

Indispensable as this qualification is, it is difficult to see how a sufficient number of clergymen possessing it can be procured. The clergy in England have scarcely any special training. Their theological knowledge is, on the average, hardly greater than that of the laity, and to raise the standard seems at present to be impossible. They are to be regarded simply as a section of the better educated class of Englishmen. Education itself must be reformed before the kind of cultivation just described can be introduced among the clergy. Just what is most needed, the progressive spirit, the insight into the present

age and the actually existing society, this is what our system of education most completely fails to supply. For it most sedulously avoids the present and occupies itself with nothing that is progressive, nothing that is not fixed and frozen up in antiquity.

Partly from timidity, partly from the real difficulty of explaining what is nearest to our own time, what men are still quarrelling about, what men have not seen the end of; partly also from a notion of laying a very deep and sure foundation, education in England commonly leaves a man very ignorant of the actual state of the world. He has been taught ancient history theoretically, because it is the true key to modern history; but his education terminates before he has any opportunity of applying the key, and his historical researches close when he is still a century or two short of the present time. He is taught the classical languages because all modern literatures have sprung from the literatures of Greece and Rome, and the consequence of this method is, that he commonly remains all his life in ignorance of modern literatures. The Latin language is considered so important as explaining to him his own, that his own language remains a riddle to him to the end of his days. If he dives into philosophy, he cannot of course be introduced too soon to Plato and Aristotle, and they effectually prevent him in too many cases from acquainting himself with the great living philosophies which move the actual world, with the Baconian logic of discovery, and all that has flowed from it, with the ethics of Kant and the Utilitarians, the inductive psychology that was founded by Locke, and the social philosophy that began with Adam Smith.

The dulness and languor that is complained of in our modern sermons is not due to any cause that operates upon the clergy alone. The Church clergy represent pretty well the average of the educated classes. If, when they undertake to discuss religious and moral questions, they are dull, it is because the education they have received—that is, the ordinary English education—has not roused their minds, has not filled them with strong ideas. Nor, indeed, could it do so. If there be such a thing as progress in human affairs, if modern society be more developed and complex than ancient, the study of the remote past can never impart a knowledge of the present, nor can the crude and rudimentary wisdom of antiquity qualify men to guide the moderns on their intricate way. It is, however, a special disadvantage under which the clergy labour that they have not the inducements and facilities that some other classes have for supplying, in after life, the defects of their early training. The lawyer, for example, is introduced by his profession to a mass of new and most important knowledge, and at the same time spurred on by ambition and by the certainty that success will bear some proportion to real desert to make himself master of it. The consequence is that he receives a second education far more thorough and profound than that of his youth. But the clerical profession is not so situated. In the Church it is demoralized by a system of promotion which has little reference to merit. In dissenting bodies perhaps merit is theoretically more considered, but the kind of merit which is most rewarded is not high, a rhetoric which corresponds fairly to the Socratic definition of rhetoric, a knack of flattery; and the judges who distribute the

rewards are ill-qualified to do so, mixed congregations unpractised in distinguishing sound doctrine from unsound, and easily hoodwinked by a cheap and vulgar fluency. The clerical profession, therefore, is not favourable to progressive intellectual cultivation; and the result is that, whereas other classes of men readily fling off the prejudices and the inertness produced by an antiquated education and educate themselves anew, "in dem Strom der Welt," the clergy not unfrequently finish their education at college, and continue drowsily quoting Horace all their lives.

Education, however, is rapidly reforming itself. It is adapting itself to the new age which we may hope is beginning, in which the powers and patriotism of the whole nation will be enlisted in the nation's service. So long as the conservative view of society prevails, an education founded on the remote past will prevail. Thinking about the actual state of society leads to seeing its faults, and that leads to change and reform. Therefore, under a conservative *régime* education instinctively avoids the actual state of society, and it does so by the contrivance of antiquarianism. Antiquarianism in education answers to conservatism in politics. On the other hand, we cannot throw ourselves into a progressive political course without adopting a progressive education. There is no middle course in education between the antiquarianism that secures the mind from the intrusion of disturbing thoughts and the modernism which deals with them unreservedly and exhaustively. We must turn our backs or our faces upon the questions of the day. There is nothing but disquiet and danger to be reaped from looking at them

sideways. This is already felt in the educational world, and a breath of new life is passing through schools and colleges. In the general re-invigoration the clergy will naturally share. But they should spread their sails at once to meet the breeze. The supply of men capable of the great work of moral instruction above described will constantly increase, but it will increase the more rapidly the more distinctly the want is recognised. Broad Churchmen must not be content with a negative teaching, with merely repudiating what is obsolete. They are called upon heartily to adopt the conception of a progressive ethic, to forget the outworn petition of the Collect, "that we being freed from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness," to accept movement as the law both of Churches and States, and to assume the position of guides in the movement.

As I have said, the special training of the clergy in England is very slight. Such as it is, however, might it not be modified in this direction? Like the rest of our education, it is corrupted by antiquarianism and formalism. The Church stands undoubtedly upon a basis which was laid in antiquity. If it is desirable that every layman should know his Bible, it is still more desirable that every clergyman should do so. It is also desirable that there should always be in the Church a certain number of theologians minutely acquainted with Biblical criticism. But it seems to me that the special training of the average clergyman should not be philological. It is a fact perversely overlooked in England that philology is a science of which a little knowledge is particularly useless. We hear much of the importance of being able to read

ancient books in the originals. But we do not hear of the immense difficulty of acquiring this power, nor of the absolute certainty that nine-tenths of those who attempt to acquire it will fail. If the study of Greek (and sometimes of Hebrew) is required of the clergy in order that they may be able to form an independent judgment of the true meaning of Biblical texts, then nothing is more certain than that the whole time spent in the study is in the majority of cases thrown away. It is not a little knowledge of Greek, but an accurate and extensive knowledge of it, that will qualify a man to form an opinion of his own upon a doubtful or difficult passage. The average clergyman should, no doubt, be superior to the average layman in knowledge of the Bible, but his superiority should consist in a greater knowledge of the best commentaries, not in any pretension,—which must necessarily be groundless,—of knowing the originals.

To gain, however, this little knowledge, which is so perfectly useless, a great deal of time is devoted. If this time were better spent, the standard of clerical efficiency might be considerably raised. A considerable knowledge, for example of modern history, and particularly of the influence of the Church upon society in all ages, might be demanded of candidates for ordination. And there is another study which would have the effect of raising the clerical order indefinitely in public estimation. They are the almoners of the people; to their hands a great part of the vast machinery of philanthropy is entrusted. Now philanthropy, unless directed by foresight and knowledge, is very far from being twice blessed; if it blesses him that gives, it frequently has a contrary effect upon him that takes. Moreover, alms-

giving without sufficient system leads to waste; some distresses it perpetuates, others it overlooks, and others it relieves two or three times over, while every failure of philanthropy damps and discourages the Christian feeling in which it originated. Yet it is matter of common complaint that the clergy are seldom men of business. May it not be urged, not as a thing merely desirable, but as imperative and as essential to the credit of the clerical profession, that the clergy should master the whole political economy of philanthropy?

If the clergy should rise to a proper conception of the magnitude of the work entrusted to them, and should become through the improvement both of general education and of their own special training not wholly unequal to the performance of it, they will find it a comparatively easy matter to sharpen, as much as may be required, the mere tools they work with. Their principal tool is speech, and unless they study the art of speech carefully and methodically, they must expect to fail in their enterprise. But they will fail, however much they study it, if they do not rigidly subordinate speech to thought and matter—reversing the Mephistophelian precept—and, on the other hand, when the matter of speech has been acquired in abundance, skill in speech will come with moderate study, though not with none. We may then reasonably expect a new pulpit rhetoric to spring up adapted to the cultivated ears of the first English generation that will have been to school. That new rhetoric will differ from the style now in vogue, as it seems to me, in two principal points.

First, it will recognise that the most effective images and illustrations are those which are drawn from the

actual experience of the audience addressed, and that the most effective language is the most vernacular that is not vulgar,—that is, the most familiar, and in its choice of words the most colloquial. A reform in sermons will take place similar to that which at the beginning of the century took place in poetry. At that time poetry had accustomed itself to deal in images that answered to nothing in contemporary experience, and that were only faint and vague reflections of those which earlier poets had drawn from the actual life of their own age. At the same time poets had adopted as part of poetic refinement a practice of denoting things by names which were not their current names in the language of the time. We may call the first fault conventionalism, and the second euphuism. Now both faults are still as apparent in sermons as they once were in poetry. As the poets described imaginary shepherds and shepherdesses living in scenery partly Sicilian, partly Italian, and partly English, a state of things answering to nothing in their readers' experience, so are we still introduced in sermons to an artificial and conventional world. We are sometimes warned against the vice of idolatry, which has been extinct in England since the time of the Saxon Heptarchy. We hear declamations against Babylon, a city which lost all independent power to do mischief about 2,300 years ago. Of course these phrases are not used literally; in the same way the shepherds of the old pastoral often stood symbolically for lovers, or poets; but such symbolism serves not to illustrate, but positively to darken thought. It is explaining what is unknown by what is incomparably more unknown. The power of the Pope in the modern world may resemble that of

Babylon in antiquity; but the audience know something already of the former, and will not learn more by hearing him compared to the latter, of which they know nothing. Not less vicious than the conventionalism of the modern pulpit is its euphuism. As the pastoral poets called a shepherd a swain and a woman a fair, so a clergyman will often call interest usury; a farmer he describes as a husbandman, and he retains the old verbal inflection in "eth" which two hundred years ago began to displease the taste of Milton. But more ruinous to rhetorical effect than all such faults of commission is his studied avoidance of all those words and phrases which he ought particularly to affect, those namely which answer to the commonest facts and reflect the homeliest and freshest experience, and which, though they want the sanction of immemorial use, and therefore call for more tact in selection and application, have a force peculiarly their own, being fully charged with the electricity of new and vivid associations.

Conventionalism and euphuism are the inevitable vices of all speaking that is perfunctory. The speaker intent upon his subject, and ardently hopeful of attaining the end he proposes to himself, slips them off as unhesitatingly as the cricketer rids himself of all superfluous encumbrances of dress. The new race of preachers that I have been imagining, having undertaken a task in which they may hope for success, but only through the utmost exertions—the task of the moral education of the nation—will soon find the artificial decorums of the pulpit intolerable to them. They will soon rub away from their style the rust of antiquarianism. Pressed on the one hand by the necessity of being grave, and on the

other by the still more imperious necessity of being intelligible and forcible, they will be driven to a certain classical distinctness and severity of outline, and the leading preachers of such a school may be expected to give new masterpieces to English literature. These leading preachers will no doubt be few, but it seems not visionary to expect that a large number, braced by the distinctness of their object and elevated by the greatness of it, may acquire the power of interesting an audience profoundly, and may make the church once more a place not merely of devotion, but also, as Protestant churches should be, of solid, continuous, and methodical instruction.

It is not indeed to be supposed that such a style would be the most popular of styles. It would be rarely pathetic, because it would be above all things honest. Depending for effect entirely upon the importance of the thing said, it might be in danger of falling into a didactic dryness. It would shrink from a lavish or spasmodic use of language as from a sin. It would give much less pleasure, and so be much less popular, than a style less severely restricted. A preacher who adapts himself without reserve or self-respect to the taste of his audience, and who tricks out his style with the flowers of Oriental poetry, such a preacher, to his own cost, will always defy competition, for he imparts pleasure in the greatest quantity and to the greatest number. Even in arts, whose main object it is to give pleasure, the best artists are seldom the most popular. Tennyson and Browning are our best poets, but they are not the most widely read. The best is never the best liked; but, on the other hand, it is equally true that

the best is always liked. Tennyson and Browning, though not read the most, are read much, and such a school of preachers as I have described would always command attention, though not enthusiastic applause. And the influence they would exert would be out of all proportion to the applause they would receive. For their words being well weighed and seriously meant would be important; the response they would elicit would be not empty praise, but bitter opposition, angry denial, and all the higher, rarer, and more gratifying forms of popular applause. In scriptural language, such preaching would be "as the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces."

There would however be, as now, a third class of preachers who, from sheer want of intellectual power, would always be dull. Assuredly no reform will ever expel dulness from the pulpit any more than from the bar. But a dull preacher is not necessarily either a bad or an ineffective teacher. The advice he gives may be good, however feebly given; and it may be followed, however coldly received. Of all those who complain of the dulness of sermons, a very small proportion ever seriously doubt that what they contain is true; a very small proportion do not, in some general way, intend to be guided by them. As I have already said, the only practical lesson which can be clearly collected from the sermons now preached,—namely, the duty of relieving distress,—has been very thoroughly learnt by the nation, and is very generally practised. If other moral rules equally reasonable were preached with equal unanimity, however feebly, they would meet with equal acceptance.

I intended to speak first of the manner of moral teaching, and then of the matter. At one point, however, manner and matter may be said to merge in each other, and I come naturally to this point in making the transition.

Teaching in all subjects proceeds as much by example as precept; in morals, the importance of example is even greater than in other subjects, and it is characteristic of Christianity that it makes a greater use of example than any other system. Christianity starts from the unbounded admiration of a Person, and it seems to me that all true moral progress is made through admiration; in other words, that before you can rise to a higher moral standard you must become aware, by actual experience, of the existence of that higher standard. Now while all Christian schools have agreed in putting forward Christ as the supreme Example, no Christian school has ever treated Him as the only one. The early and mediæval Church surrounded the central figure with a host of inferior objects of admiration. Protestants have put aside this ancient calendar, but they have not repudiated the principle of it. They hold the admiration offered to have been excessive in degree or superstitious in kind, and the objects of it have been, in many instances, ill chosen. But the principle of setting up objects of imitation other than Christ is admitted by them as much as by Catholics. The lives of Moses, David, Ezra, St. Paul, furnish the material of a large proportion of Protestant sermons. Nor does any school theoretically maintain that such objects of imitation are to be found only in the Bible. No preacher is blamed for referring in the pulpit to modern examples of virtue;

but it is supposed to be advisable, in the main, to keep within the limits of scriptural history.

This notion seems to me to have the same origin as the notion, which almost brings Christianity into contempt, that all sermons should be of an extreme simplicity. It arose in the missionary preaching of the Methodists of the last century. Addressing an almost barbaric population, they naturally simplified their teaching to the utmost limit; and for the same reason they confined themselves to the one book which they knew thoroughly themselves, and had any chance of making their disciples know. But a practice which in such circumstances was inevitable is very ill-adapted to a preaching addressed to the educated classes, and therefore to preaching generally in the age to which we look forward of universal education. To an intelligent audience, the best examples of virtue are not, as a general rule, those of the Bible, but examples taken from modern times, and from a society like our own. The men of the Bible lived, in the first place, in circumstances unfamiliar to us; it follows that it must cost us an effort to realize their actions and characters. Nay, more than this follows. It follows that we may often make mistakes in estimating their characters, and conceive them not merely imperfectly, but wrongly. Must not this frequently happen to a preacher of only ordinary intelligence and information? Do not persons acquainted with antiquity often smile at the innocent modernism with which the acts of Jacob or Deborah are discussed in the pulpit? Do not travellers tell us of the contempt with which, after becoming acquainted with Oriental manners, they recollected clerical interpretations of Old Testament history? Now, there is

no reason why the clergy should expose themselves to the risk of making such mistakes. Incomparably the larger portion of Scripture history is entirely unnecessary for the establishment of any theological doctrine. When it is discussed in the pulpit nothing is drawn from it but example, and this might be drawn equally well, and without running any risk, from modern history.

The most impressive and practically useful of biographies, *cæteris paribus*, are those of fellow-countrymen of the most recent date. Their characters are legible to us without effort, their conduct imitable without much modification, and everything about them is interesting to us. The places where they lived we have seen or may see. We may stand where they stood and touch what they touched. Their *relics* are among us, ready for a worship which need not be pushed to extravagance. To disregard all these moral influences, to suffer the great and good to pass away from among us without any memorial that really keeps them in memory,—unremembered by three-fourths of the population and unknown in the next generation to all but a few students,—and in the meanwhile to concentrate our admiration upon the Hebrew judges and kings of an epoch separated from us, as we may say, by three civilizations—what does this involve? It involves an enormous gap or break in the gradations of our moral feelings, which should extend in regular series from what is near to what is remote. From our family affections and admirations we ought not to pass abruptly to the largest and most comprehensive admirations. Cosmopolitanism, said Coleridge, is not possible but by antecedence of patriotism. And patriotism is only another name for

the worship of relics. We should begin by admiring all the virtue which is near us in time and space. We should contemplate all the greatness which appears in our neighbourhood, until, as in natural course it will, the very land which has been the stage of it acquires a sacredness. From this we should pass regularly backward through time, adding our great fellow-countrymen of a past age to those of the present; then we should pass to other countries and times, rising to those names which are highest of all, but remote through those which are less high but near to us. We should form, as it were, a national calendar, consecrate our ancestors—keep their images near to us,—and so reap the inestimable advantage of living always *coram Lepidis.*

I suggest, then, that the clergy should draw largely upon English history and biography for illustrations of their moral teaching. Carlyle has said that every nation's true Bible is its history. If the Hebrew history be a cosmopolitan Bible, or rather the first part of one, I think there should be national Bibles also, and I can imagine no more proper and nobler task for a clergy than the perpetual shaping and elaborating of such a national monument. Such a task they would practically undertake if they habitually resorted to English history for examples. However many mistakes might be made in the estimate of character, however many false idols set up, however much exaggerated declamation delivered, however often the truth of history might be warped to gain a moral, the continual application of a large number of minds to the work of sifting our history for the purpose of preserving in memory whatever in it was memorable, would, I believe, result in

nothing less than this. The clergy themselves would have a task to perform which would demand some reading and thought; they would have to make their Bible, instead of merely citing it by rote. The people would listen to matter intrinsically interesting to them, and hardly capable of being made dull by any feebleness in the preacher; and in the end there would spring up an idealized history, which would become familiar to every imagination and give a new sureness and continuousness to the progress of the national mind, and a new elevation to individual character.

Let us now proceed to consider more closely the matter of moral teaching. This divides itself naturally into what men should not do, and what they should do.

On the first of these two heads I shall not linger long. I have only to remark that the moral censorship of the clergy can only be influential when it is founded upon a real study of human life. Their criticisms must above all things be particular. General declamations against immorality are easy, but of scarcely any use, especially when couched in Oriental language. The special cause of immorality, against which preaching may be effective, is that indistinctness of conception which prevents people from seeing under what general head particular actions are to be classed. All agree to censure dishonesty, but people will differ on the dishonesty of particular actions; and what can be done by preaching is to prevent men from persuading themselves that wrong actions are not wrong, or from entirely overlooking the criminality of them. For this purpose the preacher must especially inquire what are the criminal acts to which people are most tempted, what are the particular vices of particular

classes of men, or professions, or trades. The fault to be found with the present school of preachers is, not that they neglect altogether to do this, but that they do not do it with sufficient study and thoroughness. Our censors content themselves too much with generalities. When great public scandals arise—as lately, for example, in the commercial world—the censorship of the press is vigorous and useful; but where is the censorship of the pulpit? The journalists either had or procured the necessary special knowledge; but the clergy generally knew too little of the subject to be able to deal with it. Alarmists sometimes come forward with strong assertions of the utter demoralization of large classes of the community, or of the gradually advancing demoralization of the whole. Mr. Herbert Spencer writes an essay on the "Morals of Trade," in which he maintains, with a quantity of detailed evidence, the universal dishonesty of the trading classes. If all this is true, should the clergy leave it to be discovered by amateur moralists and preachers? Is it not their business to find it out and proclaim it?

But much more may be done by positive precept than in the way of negative criticism. The inadequacy of sermons to restrain vice is proverbial. A strong temptation undoes in a moment the work of many sermons. On the other hand, when virtue is regarded not negatively but as a system of positive actions, exhortations have not the same inutility. The majority of men have a certain desire, when they are not influenced by strong temptation, to do their duty, and will listen, I think, with remarkable docility, to any one who will intelligently explain to them what it is, and give them

advice as to the best way of doing it. That the Christian Church has much influence in diminishing crime it is possible to deny, and would be difficult to prove; but its positive results,—the charitable institutions with which it has covered the country,—are visible to all.

This one great and undeniable achievement of the Church seems to me instructive, as showing what sort of enterprise the Church may engage in with real hopes of success. The Church will be listened to when it prescribes definite deeds the good results of which are easily seen. In such a case, so far from preaching to deaf ears, it wins an obedience which is excessive and unreasonable. Men give and give in defiance of reason and political economy. Are there no other duties equally plain which the Church might inculcate with equal effect?

My own profession constantly brings before me instances of an immorality—so I think it should be called—which proceeds simply from want of instruction in morals, which has most disastrous consequences, and which, I believe, the Church could cure. I mean the habit which fathers have of delegating altogether to others the education of their children. Not from any indifference to the welfare of their children, not from any deliberate contempt for moral obligation, but simply from never having had this particular duty pointed out to them, they become guilty of a neglect the immediate consequences of which are sometimes startling, and the less direct and obvious consequences beyond calculation. I have met with young men who have been suffered to grow up in an incredible intellectual barbarism, the father working conscientiously for them all the time,

but delegating altogether the particular work of education. I do not suppose such extreme cases are common; the majority of parents are not so unfortunate in their choice of delegates; they find teachers for their sons who are tolerably competent to teach, and they persuade themselves, no doubt, that it is really best not to interfere with those who have made a special study of the art of education. The principle of the division of labour is adopted. The father has not time to do all that is necessary to be done for his children; part he will do himself, but part must be entrusted to others. He hands over to others the child's education, his mind, his soul. He reserves to himself the finance department. It is not easy to estimate the mischief produced by this division of labour. I know scarcely any cause from which the community suffers so much. In the first place, consider the effect produced upon the parent himself. It is open to him to give so much time and thought to educating his children, or the same amount of both to making the money to pay for their education; and he elects the latter. In other words, he chooses an occupation which is in many cases the most sordid and illiberal drudgery, and in very few cases can be highly improving, instead of the most improving occupation in which he can be engaged. Surely there is no task which life brings with it, at least to the average man, calculated to raise him so much as the task of educating his children. It is by far the greatest and most delicate problem which he ever has to solve. It demands all his powers of thought and contrivance, and by making so constant a demand upon them forms and disciplines them; at the same time it disciplines the affections. In

short, a man cannot educate his children without at the same time in a much greater degree educating himself. What trade or profession does as much for the man who follows it? Not perhaps the most intellectual of all; and assuredly a good many of the occupations, by which men make money, are for all other purposes a mere waste of time. What then are we to think of the division of labour by which a father devolves upon others all that is valuable and dignified in fatherhood, and retains only its burdens and anxieties? What an impoverishment of character must be the effect of such an abdication of the paternal dignity! It must lead inevitably to those low views of the actual prevalence of which we are always complaining, that money-worship, that morbid industry, that insensibility to the highest interests and enjoyments.

But what is the effect upon the children themselves? I am not of course maintaining that the father should take the place of the schoolmaster, but that he should actively co-operate with the schoolmaster and supplement his work. Now his neglect of this duty to a great extent paralyses the schoolmaster. We have recently been told on good authority that the high average culture of the Scotch is due mainly to parental influence in education. It is to find an equivalent for this in England that we are always hopelessly labouring. That division of labour by which the parent loses so much is, even for its special purpose, a mistake. The teaching of special subjects may be delegated, but there is much in education which cannot be delegated, very much which can only be done at home, and a good deal which can be done only by the father. But if the child's intellectual

loss is great, his moral loss is perhaps still greater. When the father elects to perform his parental duties entirely in the counting-house, he practically surrenders his claim to filial affection. Instead of sympathy, personal care, and intimate friendship, such a father only gives his son money, a gift which will not inspire any enthusiastic gratitude. Distant respect is all that he can look for, and in the want of filial feelings the son loses more than the father loses by not inspiring them.

Here, then, is an example, as it seems to me, of an abuse which the Church might remove. It is an abuse which springs from no inveterate vice of human nature, but from a moral rudeness, an ignorance which a little instruction might cure. Without much eloquence, preachers might make men ashamed of a negligence like this. And if a better way of thinking on such a point were introduced, the effects would be incalculable. The standard of national cultivation might be permanently raised and a kind of self-denial introduced which Englishmen seldom practise, the self-denial not of giving money but of refraining from earning it.

My profession, as I have said, brings this matter particularly before my notice. The teacher can do little for the pupil for whom his parents have done nothing, and to show parents their duty is evidently in the province of the teachers of morality. It is therefore at this particular point that it becomes more clearly visible to me how little teaching of morality there really is in England, and in how unenlightened a condition is the moral sense of a great proportion of the nation. I dare say other illustrations of the same fact will occur to many of my readers. Other instances might no doubt be cited of

plain moral duties which are very generally neglected out of sheer ignorance and want of instruction. A great many maxims which literary men call platitudes are to a large majority of people so unfamiliar as to deserve rather to be called paradoxes. It does not follow because they are worn out for literary purposes that they ought not continually to be repeated in the pulpit,—repeated, if possible, with a perpetual variety of language and illustration; but, if this is not possible, with the dullest monotony rather than not at all. But they will not be found dull if they are expressed with only a little conviction, with only a little simplicity of language. What a few simple platitudes made up the whole of Thackeray's philosophy!

If it be inquired why such a plain duty as that to which I have called attention is so little inculcated, the answer seems to be that it does not rise very obviously out of any text of Scripture. As, however, no one probably will dispute that it is a duty, and one of the most important duties, this example may serve to show how far preachers are misled by their inveterate habit of resting morality upon the Bible. If the "canon of inspiration be closed," as they say, if we have no means of determining whether an action be right or wrong but by referring to certain Greek and Hebrew formulæ, then indeed they are justified, then indeed is the teaching of morality an insane pretension. But it is not so.

> "Die Geisterwelt ist nicht verschlossen:
> Dein Sinn ist zu, dein Herz ist todt."

Since I have introduced the question of education, and since we have learnt of late years—what we might

have learnt from ancient philosophers long ago—the great importance and the great difficulty of the art of education, let me go on to suggest that it is an art which it behoves the clergy especially to study. Education will not probably, for the future, be strictly in their hands so much as it has been. But if, as I hold, parents are bound to take a great share personally in the education of their children, and if at the same time education is a most difficult art, it follows that the clergy must teach the parents this art. There exists no other machinery by which they can learn it, and this machinery is both adapted to the work and placed everywhere within reach. The diffusion of really solid information upon an art which men and women of all ranks, competent or incompetent, have to practise, and are, for the most part, really anxious to practise well, the art of educating children,—this is an inestimable benefit which it is within the power of the Church to confer upon the nation.

Enough for the present of direct instruction in morality. The sum of my argument hitherto has been that the sermon ought not to be purely theological, nor purely hortatory, but ought to contain direct moral teaching. Such moral teaching, I hold, should be explicit and detailed, not confining itself to principles and leaving rules to be inferred, but rather stating the rules in such a manner as to make the principles appear through them. But there is another subject besides theology from which morality ought not to be severed, and cannot be severed without losing most of its vitality. This is political and social science. It is common to sneer at political religion, and to maintain that the clergy should have nothing to

do with politics. Yet it is evident enough that in relinquishing politics the clergy practically renounce their influence over men, and become mere spiritual directors to women and children, and that the effect of this is to lower the clerical character, and to give to the proceedings of the clergy, when the interests of their own order force them into politics, all the helplessness, cowardice, and recklessness of inexperience. That the clergy should not engage themselves in party conflicts is true; it may even be true that they should refrain as much as possible from political action of any kind. But, if so, this is not because politics are out of their province, but in order that they may exercise a more elevated kind of political influence. If they are not to engage in political strife as combatants, it is in order that they may be better qualified to act as umpires; it is that they may be more efficient as expounders of political principle that they are to avoid political action. Taken in any more absolute sense the maxim that the clergy are not to meddle with politics degrades the clerical function in the most pitiful manner, and condemns it to a feebleness and insignificance which must make all men of strong character disdain to take it upon themselves. Morals cannot be severed from politics any more than the individual can be isolated from society. If the individual is profoundly modified by the character and condition of the corporate body, if morbid moral states affect whole classes at once, and the moral health of the whole makes itself seen in the separate parts, how is it possible for the teacher to confine himself to the individual and neglect the State? Besides, an important part of the moral duty of the individual is his duty to the

State: and how can the teacher in any effective way give instruction in this without entering into political questions? Once more: this particular part of moral duty is one which especially requires to be carefully explained, because it is an advanced and abstruse part of the subject. Natural affection may make a man a good husband or father, but nature by itself will not make a man a good citizen in a community like ours. This virtue can only be the fruit of much reflection, and who is to excite and direct this reflection if the clergy do not? If in other parts of morality one often has occasion to remark the rudeness of the national mind, it is perhaps especially manifest here just because there is so much political activity. Almost every one must have his political opinions, must take his side; but as there is no diffused political education, no generally understood political principles, each question is decided by itself really at the dictate of a faction, nominally by the arguments furnished by the heads of the faction, and politics degenerate into the senseless bickering of opposite prejudices and the interminable controversies of parties not open to conviction.

If people considered the Bible as a whole, and not merely in its separate texts, they would surely see that no book presents morals in such an inextricable union with politics. Did those Hebrew prophets, who are the prototypes of our modern preachers, refrain from meddling with politics? Are not their utterances instinct with the sense of the national life, the national vocation, and the continuity of the national history? These prophets, in fact, were not so much what we should call moralists as politicians of a doctrinaire school, addressing rather classes

than individuals, and dealing with public affairs rather than private. I do not certainly urge that they should be closely imitated; but modern preachers seem to think they are following the Bible when they omit all mention of politics, and treat English history with complete indifference. Because the prophets speak of Jerusalem—their own city—they too speak of Jerusalem—a foreign city, and, by way of imitating men in whom patriotism was a burning passion, are silent about their own country and the events of their own age.

It may be answered that if the Old Testament is national the New is universal, and that the latter should be followed rather than the former. Assuredly, when I urge that patriotism should be inculcated, national history closely connected with morality, and civil duties carefully explained, I do not mean that this is the ultimate lesson of morality. There is a higher doctrine still,—of which the New Testament is the text-book,—a universal morality, which it is still more important to teach. But as the race rose to the universal morality through the national, so, it seems to me, must the individual. And I find it a capital mistake, in the present school of preachers, that they omit this middle class of duties altogether. The morality of the Old Testament and of Plutarch has still its place, and is indispensable. It ought to be taught both as a step to the higher morality and to prevent it from becoming a hindrance to it. English prejudices, insular selfishness, and contempt for foreigners, are no doubt as much opposed as possible to Christianity. But they are to be cured, not by leading people to forget that they are Englishmen, not by severing morality from all those associations of

locality and circumstance by means of which it most naturally attaches itself to the mind. The abuse of patriotism is not to be cured by destroying patriotism itself; but patriotism is to be strengthened by being purified, by being deprived of its exclusiveness and ultimateness. The Christian unity of mankind is to be taught as a final lesson, which will be easiest learnt, or rather will only be learnt by those who have already realized the unity of the State.

Politics then should be a part, and a principal part, of the studies of the clergy. To discover and popularize the lessons that may be drawn from our history, to idealize the nation and familiarize it in its unity to the minds of its members, is a most vital part of the moral teaching of the community. The phrase, political religion, may have very different meanings; there are two senses in which it signifies a hateful thing, but there is a third sense in which it is an admirable and necessary thing. It is a hateful thing when it means religion made the tool of a political party or governing class, as when the Church consecrated the absolutism of the Stuarts, or, on a smaller scale, when the parson preaches submission to the squire. It is a hateful thing when it means the Church interfering with public affairs merely with a view of strengthening its own position, of preserving its own influence or privileges or endowments. But when a Church is independent of political parties and sure of the respect of the people, when it can speak with impartiality and with authority, then political religion means only the purifying of politics by connecting them with duty, honour, and piety; it means only the discouragement of faction,

the assertion of general principles, the keeping before the eyes of the people a political ideal. And as in the former senses political religion is only another name for corrupt religion, in the latter sense it is another name for worthy and noble politics.

Besides the general duty of proclaiming political first principles, there seems to be a more special political function belonging to the clergy. Taken indifferently from all classes, and addressing assemblies composed indifferently of all classes, they are the natural mediators in the perpetual warfare between class and class. This warfare is the fundamental political fact, and the leading political problem is to moderate it. Nothing can be more plainly written in the New Testament than the mission of the Church to reconcile all such differences, to pull down all barriers, and to establish unity among men. No institution would seem better adapted to forward this perpetual process of reconciliation than the institution of a clergy. An order of men taken from all the warring classes, and removed, as it were, from the arena of conflict, expected to have intercourse with the poor and admitted to intercourse with the rich, enabled to hear both sides of the controversy, highly educated, so as to form an intelligent opinion, not dependent (that is, where the Church is well ordered) on the favour of either side, and provided with frequent opportunities of addressing both sides together, — such an order should do much to remove the principal cause of discord between classes — which is ignorance of each other's interests and feelings, — and they should be able to pronounce with more authority than any other men the verdict of justice.

If morality cannot be properly taught without entering into political questions, neither can it be separated from what is called social science. Those minor arrangements of society by which the welfare of sections of the community are affected and the course of their lives determined, have incalculable moral consequences. This is so plain that no one doubts that such questions fall within the province of the clergy. When the periodical famine begins at the East end of London, the papers are full of the letters of clergymen, and they become the leaders of a philanthropic campaign. The only question is whether the clergy do not confine themselves too much to effects, and neglect causes too much. Is their province limited to the pointing out of social evils and the application of remedies? Should not rather cure give place to prevention? Is not the removal of the causes of social disease more important than the alleviation of its effects? If this be so, it would seem that a field of study lies open before the clergy which they have as yet very imperfectly occupied. Take as an example, the condition of the agricultural poor. This is universally admitted to be one of the most difficult social problems. What renders it specially difficult is the fact that the active intelligence of the country is chiefly collected in the towns, and therefore withdrawn from the study of the subject. Now the Church furnishes an organization by which the presence of at least one man of cultivation is secured even in the most secluded districts. This problem, therefore, is one which specially falls to the Church: from the Church, surely we may say, the country has a right to demand the solution of it. Yet among the country clergy,—who are most zealous in the

care of their parishes,—how few generalize upon the facts before them, how few penetrate to the causes of the evil! We hear of few Kingsleys and few Girdlestones.

Let me now try and gather into one view all these considerations. The clergy are charged with the task of applying to the wants of men, both individuals and societies, the remedy provided by certain religious and moral principles and a certain organization established eighteen hundred years ago. They need, therefore, to study two things,—Christianity and that modern society to which Christianity is to be applied. Society is constantly shifting, it is extremely complex, and philosophy during the last hundred years has thrown much light upon the laws which govern its changes. If therefore a system of morality is to be built on the basis of Christian theology, as it must be if Christianity is the universal religion, it will not be sufficient for the clergy to read the New Testament and imbue themselves with its maxims. They must read with equal diligence in the book of the modern time. Their business is not merely to repeat a message; they are charged with an embassy which demands the employment of their own independent judgment and discretion. They must add a philosophy to their religion, they must originate, combine, adapt. They must be not merely passive channels of ancient wisdom, passive administrators of ancient rules, but thinkers, interpreters of the age, the living legislators of a living society. Their function is high, not merely by the sacredness of the interests committed to them, but also by the high powers, the wide cultivation, and the vigorous originality which they are required to exercise.

When a view like this is presented, it is commonly met by two objections; the one, that such work is above the powers that any large body of men can be expected to possess; the other, that it would be degradation for the clergy to occupy themselves with work so secular. When both these objections issue from the same mouths they may be thought to refute each other, but they are tenable separately. The first objection, then, says that the average educated Englishman—and the average clergyman will never rise above this standard—does not understand political economy or the principles of political and social science, nor has he fresh views of moral philosophy, nor is he versed in English history, still less in modern history generally. How can you expect a large class of men to be qualified to lecture on all these subjects when we do not find that any large class of men has any considerable acquaintance with any one of them? But in the first place, this is somewhat unjust to the average educated man. Most men of intelligence, after a few years of intercourse with the world, form independent views upon these subjects. Their views are not always very clear or comprehensive; but then it is to be remembered that to form them has not been a business, but rather a recreation. They are the fruit of accidental and occasional reflection upon the facts of life. Might not then the average clergyman—assumed equal in intelligence to the average layman—be expected to form more intelligent views on these subjects if he once understood it to be part of his duty to study them? Not perhaps at once, not at the time of taking orders; but after twenty years of continuous and methodical study, why should

not a man of ordinary intelligence be able to say something worth attention, at any rate on some one of them?

"But then the clergyman has no time for study! He is expected to do so many things; his congregation intrude so constantly upon his leisure; so much activity and publicity are forced upon him." But in the first place the studies of which I have been speaking are not of the kind which specially require seclusion from the world. I have been advocating the study of actual life and society; such a study absolutely requires a good deal of contact with society and experience of life. Still it must be admitted that a certain amount of solitude is the indispensable condition of all study; the facts collected in the world must be arranged and generalized in private. A perpetual round of petty engagements is fatal to progress even in practical studies. We suffer from this malady in all departments of culture at once at the present time. Not only in the Church, but among the teaching class at the Universities and in schools, as idleness was the besetting sin of the last age, industry is the besetting sin of the present; or, more correctly, the idleness has been succeeded by a merely external and superficial industry. Our conversion seems to have begun not at the heart but at the extremities. The hands and feet have thrown off their listlessness and move to and fro indefatigably; the tongue, throat, and lungs tax themselves prodigiously; but the change will be more in form than in substance till it penetrates to the brain and will. In all the professions a man's first duty now is to renounce the ambition of becoming distinguished for activity; the

temptation chiefly to be avoided is that of undertaking more work than he can do in first-rate style. The quality of work must be improved, and for that end, if necessary, the quantity reduced. A higher and calmer sort of activity must be arrived at—economy in energy, expenditure without waste, zeal without haste. The moral teachers of the community should set the example of an industry thus tempered, of a proper distribution of life between solitude and society, between contemplation and action. They are the last persons in the world who should allow their work to be spoiled by the unreasonable expectations of others. How can they direct the actions of others if they have not independence enough to direct their own? The question for all people, but particularly for them, is not how they are expected to do their work, but how their work may best be done; and the higher the kind of work, the more necessary it is that the worker should claim and use the privilege of doing it in his own way. If he is to submit to any other opinion in such a matter, at least let it be an authority above him, not an ignorant clamour from beneath.

The other objection represents the clergy as degraded or drawn away from their true function by becoming teachers of morality. Their province, it is said, is the higher one of religion and theology; however important morality may be, the clergy have work more important still which they cannot neglect for it. Those who urge this objection generally either assert or imply that morality is practically taught in the teaching of religion, and that it is sufficient if a little practical advice is thrown in at the end of a theological discourse as it is at the end of some of St. Paul's Epistles. I

trust I have shown that this is not really sufficient, that the teaching of morality is no such simple matter, but requires deep and various study, original thought, and copious explanation and illustration. I trust I have shown that the want of moral teaching is a great evil, whether it be unavoidable or not. But I do not wish theology to be thrown into the background in order to make room for morality. I am not one of those who think that theology can be dispensed with. Not so much morality as life itself seems to me to require the support of a hope that goes beyond calculation, and a faith transcending knowledge. And if a faith in goodness and a divination of happiness lie at the bottom of our life, then I willingly concede the foremost place in the ministrations of the clergyman to the inspiring and cherishing of such sentiments of trust and ardent anticipation, which are the elastic spring that sets virtue in motion. Nothing is sounder, as I think, at any rate, nothing is more Christian than the method which puts the motives to virtue and the temperaments or affections of virtue before the deeds in which they result. But whatever may be said against morality without religion, is there not also something to be said against a religion that is without morality? The religions of antiquity were more or less of such a kind, and the religion which superseded them did so mainly because it was not of such a kind. This religion placed human life under a stern law; it did not consecrate the usages it found existing, but subjected them to a searching criticism, referred them to an ideal standard. If the first Christians had been so busy with their theology as to find no leisure for a protest against the "infamis arena," their religion

might have remained (and would it not have deserved to remain?) undistinguished from the pagan worships that surrounded it. A religion that has exhausted its moral force, that has become unexacting and conventional in its discipline, has the feebleness of religion divided from morality, of Paganism itself. Has Christianity exhausted all its destructive and reconstructive powers? Has it no new prohibitions, no new commands? If so, let the clergy confine themselves to theology. If society is finally set on its right basis, if the proper way of living is as clear as daylight to every one, and there remains nothing to struggle against but the weakness of individuals, the human tendency to "step aside," then let the clergy confine themselves to theology. But most of them believe the millennium to be still future. If so, why are they Conservatives?

One thing remains to be said. I have had, of course, the average clergyman in view throughout this essay; to men of uncommon ability I have no pretension to offer advice. In considering what work ordinary men should do, we have to take account not merely of the importance of the work, but also of their ability to do it. One of the greatest practical difficulties is the necessary incompetence of the average clergyman to that part of his work which is most important. It is not impossible, as I have argued, to find a great abundance of men who, well educated and with facilities and motives for continuous study given them, would be able to discuss questions of duty, whether private or public, questions of social arrangement, details of philanthropic plans, with sufficient ability. It is not hopeless that it should be possible to attain a high tone in the Church, so that a

large number of men might be inspired with a genuine ardour of religious feeling. What is difficult is to imagine how a large number of men can be found competent to treat of the deepest and most delicate subjects that can occupy the human mind, "the springs of life, the depths of awe," without degrading them. Is it possible for any one who remembers the proverbial dumbness of Englishmen on all topics of deep feeling, to listen to the unrestrained effusion of pulpit rhetoric without the strongest suspicion of hypocrisy? Such hypocrisy can scarcely be avoided by those who have to treat of matters too high for their powers. The congregation demand the expression of more ardent feeling than the preacher has, the discussion of deeper questions than he understands. The supply rises to the level of the demand, but by means often of insincerity and superficiality.

Since, then, the great difficulty is in the want of a sufficient supply of ability, there is the most urgent necessity for increasing this supply by all possible means. I have already remarked that an improvement in general education is among these possible means, and that something also may be expected from an improvement of special clerical training. Perhaps also the ability which is already at command might be better distributed. We might have two kinds of sermons preached by two different classes of men. The common parochial sermon might be of a simple and practical kind, and confined in the main to questions which are within the range of an ordinary preacher. Then, besides, you might have in the larger churches of towns lectures delivered by the ablest men, and dealing with the deepest subjects.

But, above all things, if there be any cause already

at work which depresses the average of ability in the teaching class, let us remove it if possible; let us, in any case, avoid increasing the intensity of its operation. One such cause there is, a practice which, though it belongs peculiarly to religious bodies, yet is to be found in secular institutions as well, lowering the standard of ability among orders of men who, for various purposes requiring high ability, are constituted by election. This is the practice of narrowing the area of choice, of diminishing by disqualifications the number of eligible candidates. What lowers ability in the American Congress? The rule which requires a man to belong to the particular State for which he is returned. In the same way, Mr. Hare argues that half the elective wisdom of England is lost by the rule which confines a man's vote to a special locality. To come to a case more closely resembling the Church: the standard of teaching ability at Universities is lowered when Fellows are elected only from the members of particular colleges, or only from the particular University. Now, this *closeness* prevails most intensely in religious bodies. It is practised on grounds which are perfectly tenable, which are most plausible; nevertheless it depresses everywhere the efficiency of religious teaching. Not from any selfish or corrupt motive, but from zeal for what is believed to be truth, each religious denomination refuses to be taught by any one whose belief does not exactly coincide with its own. It is certain that such a rule will be most exclusive of the highest order of teaching power. Genius refuses to be thus fettered. And in a lower rank power will constantly be postponed to correctness or supposed correctness. Extensive belief will be preferred to intensive. A great

number of half-convictions will be preferred to a smaller number of entire, intense, and infectious convictions.

Now that we have become familiar with great national schemes of education for the young, if we turn our attention to the provision which exists for adult education, the suspicion may strike us that it also requires to be made national. Adult education, so far as concerns religion and morals, is given in churches and chapels, and it is depressed, just as schools have been depressed, by want of unity. As each neighbourhood furnished itself as it was inclined, or as it best could, with schools, so has each sect furnished itself with its own religious teaching. If the sect is large, or belongs to a cultivated class, or both, it is able to procure good teaching; but if its adherents belong principally to the less educated classes, or if it is small, then of necessity its teaching will be of bad quality.

Thus from my own starting-point I arrive at the same conclusion at which the other contributors to this volume have arrived from theirs,—namely, that in religion we want comprehension and union. Others may show that division means narrowness, illiberality, and ignorance, and that union brings enlightenment, moderation, and tolerance. My object is to repeat the old familiar maxim, that division is weakness and union strength. Differences of opinion we cannot avoid, but we can avoid divisions in organization and action. On one object all religious bodies are agreed,—namely, in wishing to give people good advice for the conduct of their lives. What I urge is, that if they divide they will give worse advice and with fainter effect than if they combine. Attempts to narrow the basis of the Church of England, and to mul-

tiply the conditions of teachership in it, whether directly or by the indirect method of severing its connexion with the State, are intelligible when they are made by a certain class of men, and even justifiable when made by another class. Men who do not care whether the people are taught religion and morality or not, but are irritated with the Church for some party reason, may intelligibly take this way of disabling it. Those who wish to demolish all existing systems with a view of erecting another on their ruins, may be justified, by the morality of revolution, in adopting this most promising contrivance for doing so. But Christians, and even religious indifferentists that are not also revolutionists, must be blind indeed to take such a course. It is the direct way to discredit Christianity, and, in a Christian country, to discredit Christianity is to discredit morality.

NOTES.

PAGE 9, *line* 8 *from bottom.*

Of course this assertion does not cover the case of "immoral" Establishments, like the Irish Church. But even in this instance we may hope that the policy of endowing the three principal religious communities in Ireland from the religious resources of the country is not dead yet.

T. F. W.

PAGES 102-3.

This essay was written more than a year ago, and was in the hands of the printer for publication in this volume many weeks before the debates on the Irish Church began. Nothing has been said during those debates that induces me to modify my opinions. But the course which events are taking I deeply deplore. That men like Mr. Bright, who have long been consistent advocates of the Voluntary Principle, and others like Mr. Gladstone, who are tainted (as he seems to be) with the Free Church heresy, should press on the naked policy of mere disestablishment, was of course to be expected. But it is grievous to see men like Earl Russell repudiating their own for an inferior policy for fear of being shut out from a share in their party's triumph. And all the more grievous when one reflects how feasible in itself—though, may be, not actually feasible in face of the bigotry of both Protestants and Romanists—their policy is, and what excellent results might flow from it. The one good result to be hoped for from bare disestablishment is the conciliation of the peasantry—a result which will (confessedly) never be obtained till the land question is also settled. But the set off of evil against this good is not inconsiderable. The Romanist clergy will be as ultramontane, that is as anti-national, as ever; the Presbyterians will be thrown back into the sharp sectarianism which their connexion with the State had considerably modified; the Established Church will sink into a bitterly Orange

Episcopalian sect, served by a rapidly deteriorating clergy. Yet the good might have been achieved, and still further good also, without these concomitant evils. The problem in itself was an easy one—simply to abolish the *ascendency* of the Established Church. To place the three great denominations socially and politically on a level, and to redistribute the endowments in due proportion, was all that was needed. The former will be done, as it is, by the "levelling down" process,—the latter is pronounced impossible. I believe myself that the impossibility has been very unnecessarily taken for granted. The Protestant rabies is not the power that it once was; boldly confronted, it might have been mastered; and though the Irish priests dislike the prospect of State-endowment, I believe the Irish laity, especially the educated class, would welcome it. To endow the priests and entrust the patronage to the bishops, that is to the ultramontane leaders, would be suicidal policy; but to entrust the patronage to a Board of Roman Catholic laymen would lead to very different results,—would lead to the gradual transformation of the present bitterly Papist denomination into an Irish National Church, in communion with, but by no means subservient to—nay, very possibly in many respects antagonistic to—the Roman See. This policy would conciliate lay Ireland, both the peasantry and the wealthier classes, far more than what is now proposed. If the Irish kern has a wish in the matter, it is to see his priest in possession of the church, the parsonage, and the glebe (which Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright are willing to leave in the possession of the Anglican clergy), and to be relieved from the burdensome church-dues which he has to pay under his "voluntary" system—a system which needs to be kept in working order by frequent denunciations from the altar.

W. L. C.

THE END.

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